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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 6
JUNE 1997

RUMBLING REVIEW!
STARFOX 64



NSIDE THIS ISSUE!
FRONT MISSION ALTERNATIVE
METAL GEAR SOLID
POITER'S POINT
MARVEL SUPER HEROES
TEKKEN 3
TOBAL 2
HEXEN 64
DRACULA 3D
SWAGMAN
ALUNDRA
SONIC JAM
GEX 2
BLASTO
STEEL REIGN
JERSEY DEVIL
TONIC TROUBLE

FIRST LOOK
CRASH 2

SPECIAL REPORT
TOKYO GAME SHOW PART 1



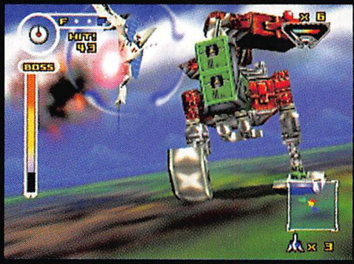
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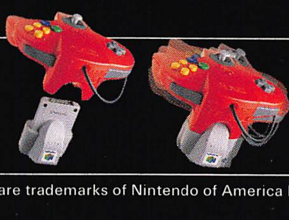


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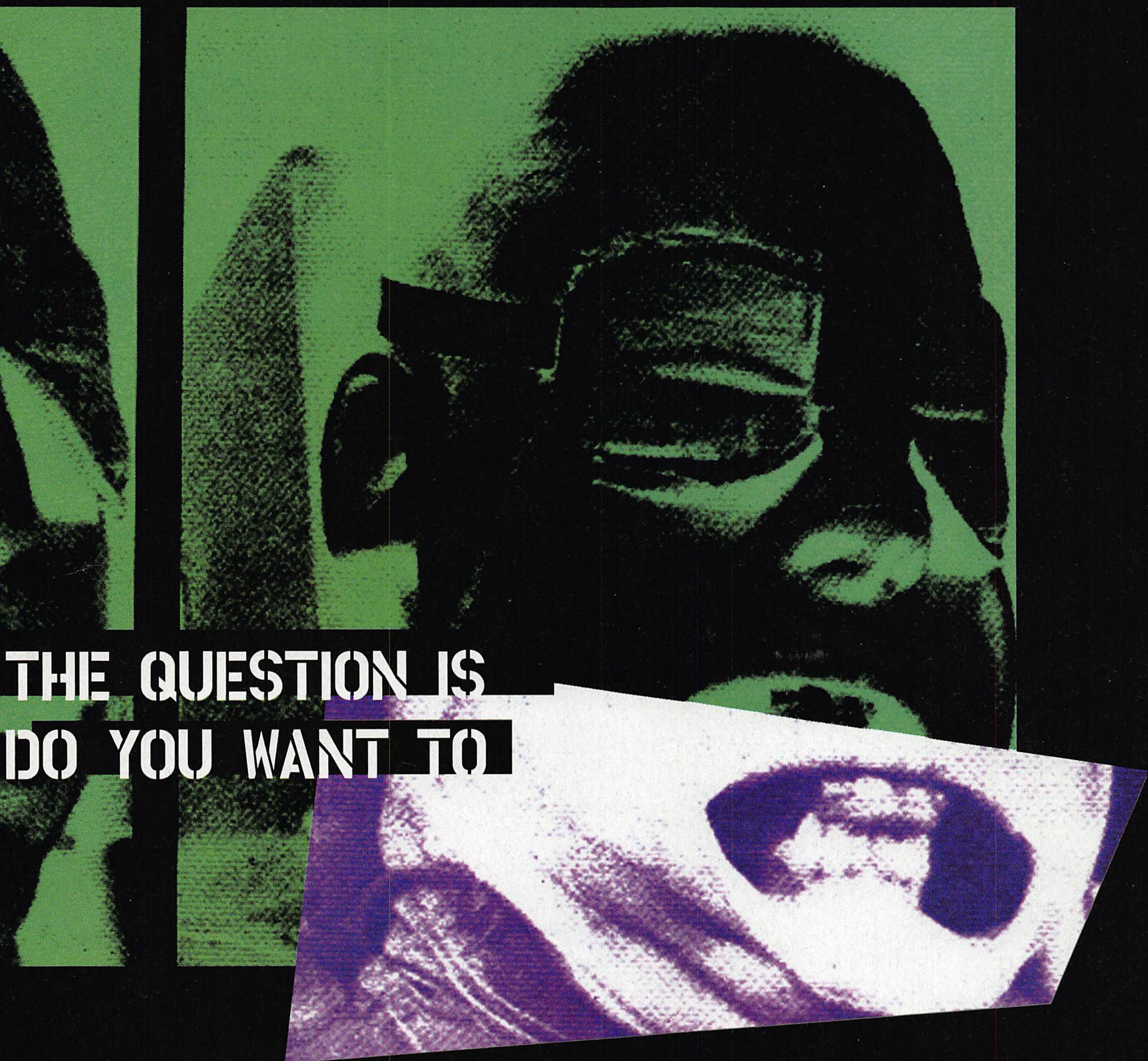
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Ed Zone



Welcome to the June issue of GameFan. As you can already see, some changes have taken place as we've begun to spruce things up a bit in the interest of staying fresh, vibrant and exciting!

Since no burning topic comes to mind, I'll fill my 55th Ed Zone by dealing with some issues, answering some critics and generally filling space, so in the instance anyone actually reads this page there's something here.

Last month, the focus was on Sega. Questions were raised and forecasts projected. Well, I'm happy to report that since, they've been back to GF with not only some choice games, but choice words as well. Turns out I actually had a point, as Sega is tapping into the import scene quite heavily in the months to come. The best news comes in November, with *Sonic R* (the new Yuji Naka *Sonic* which uses the meaty 3D engine featured on pg. 68) hitting US soil as well as *Enemy Zero*, Warp's phenomenal follow up to *D*. *Shining the Holy Ark* is coming in July, *Bomberman* in September and Sega is looking at *Grandia*, *Gun Griffon 2*, and *Silhouette Mirage*, to name only a few. Basically, they're adopting a Nintendo-like point of view, basing their emphasis on quality over quantity. A smart choice when you consider the amount of great SS software that debuted at the Tokyo Game Show (we'll feature GD Net and Sega in Part 2 of our show coverage). Sega wouldn't comment on the new hardware, except to say that it does exist, as they seem determined to keep current Saturn users happy and recruit more of them through exciting software, mainly from Japan. Sega's back on track.

Now for those criticisms, all of which interested me, except for the ones from Team Sandbox that I won't even dignify with a reply (except to say, "My, you are a dim bulb."). A few maintain that we exude some bias towards Sony and their PlayStation, covering way more PS than Saturn or Nintendo, and boosting PS scores. I assure you, each issue is structured around available software, and lately the PS has simply had more to offer, month after month. We don't choose to cover any more or less of any console, we merely comb the industry and shake loose all the playable stuff we can get our hands on. Each issue can only be as good as the games it contains, which is why GF goes the extra mile, working absurd hours, pounding our brains to provide you with a good read (no 'back o' the box' stuff here), blinding graphics and solid reporting. This takes countless hours more to achieve and we've no other reason to do it except for our readers' enjoyment. Which is why, when a group of 'industry veterans' dare talk trash, we feel like busting out the clubs and beating them senseless (Oops, I promised myself I wouldn't go there). Anyways, we are diverse, but not biased. Of course, each editor has his favorite console, but moreover we simply enjoy quality games, regardless of what console it's on. Bias only comes into play regarding genres. It's no secret that Knightmare (Dan Jevons) prefers Corridor games, and I (E. Storm) Platformers. Mike Griffin (Glitch) prefers Adventure, M. Hobbs (Substance D) Racing, Nick Des Barres (N. Rox etc.) Role Playing and Bruce Stockert (Reubus), anything that steers. But any of us will embrace any other type of game if it's good. Which leads me to my next venue: Viewpoint. First, let me reiterate, the 1-100% ranking is a grading chart. A 50 is not average but an F, and anything lower is a coaster. And if we score a game high, it is always because we, *personally*, like the game that much. We would never throw a review for anyone's sake; there's no need. Advertising's a numbers game and as the creative body, we don't even go there. That is a corporate issue. We simply produce the best mag we can and the rest is up to the suits.

"Everybody go out and find Budokan right now! It's a perfect 100!"

We're often offered bucks to feature certain games on the cover (think about this one, folks), but we've always made that a creative decision. You think 'corporate' liked *Beyond Oasis*, or *Guardian Heroes* (games with no marketing) on the cover? Heck no, we just dug the games. Now think about some other covers you've seen on obviously shoddy games that had monster budgets... Hmmm. We could've gone there... (Snap! The can of worms opens). Fact is, Metropolis is cities away, and most of the staff have never even been there. Truth be told, GF is made in offices that look like your bedroom (if you have a cool bedroom full of game stuff and spaghetti wiring) by a bunch of guys who shoot NERF darts and laugh at the Enquirer. Respect! Jeeyah!

We have no reason to bring you anything other than what we feel is the best mag possible, and so that's what we do. It's 1:45 A.M. right now, and I've spent the last six hours *preparing* my next layout (clips, bg, etc.). I could've done a quicky Quark layout in minutes and been home nestled in the sheets. And so it is throughout the GF offices. We love what we do, or we wouldn't be doing it, period.

If you still think there's some huge GF conspiracy to somehow steer people any given direction, well, then... you guessed it pal! Everybody go out and find *Budokan* right now! It's a perfect 100!

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Managing Editor
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Art Director
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Editors
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For advertising inquiries only:
Brian Olshever
(818) 706-3260/Fax: (818) 706-1367
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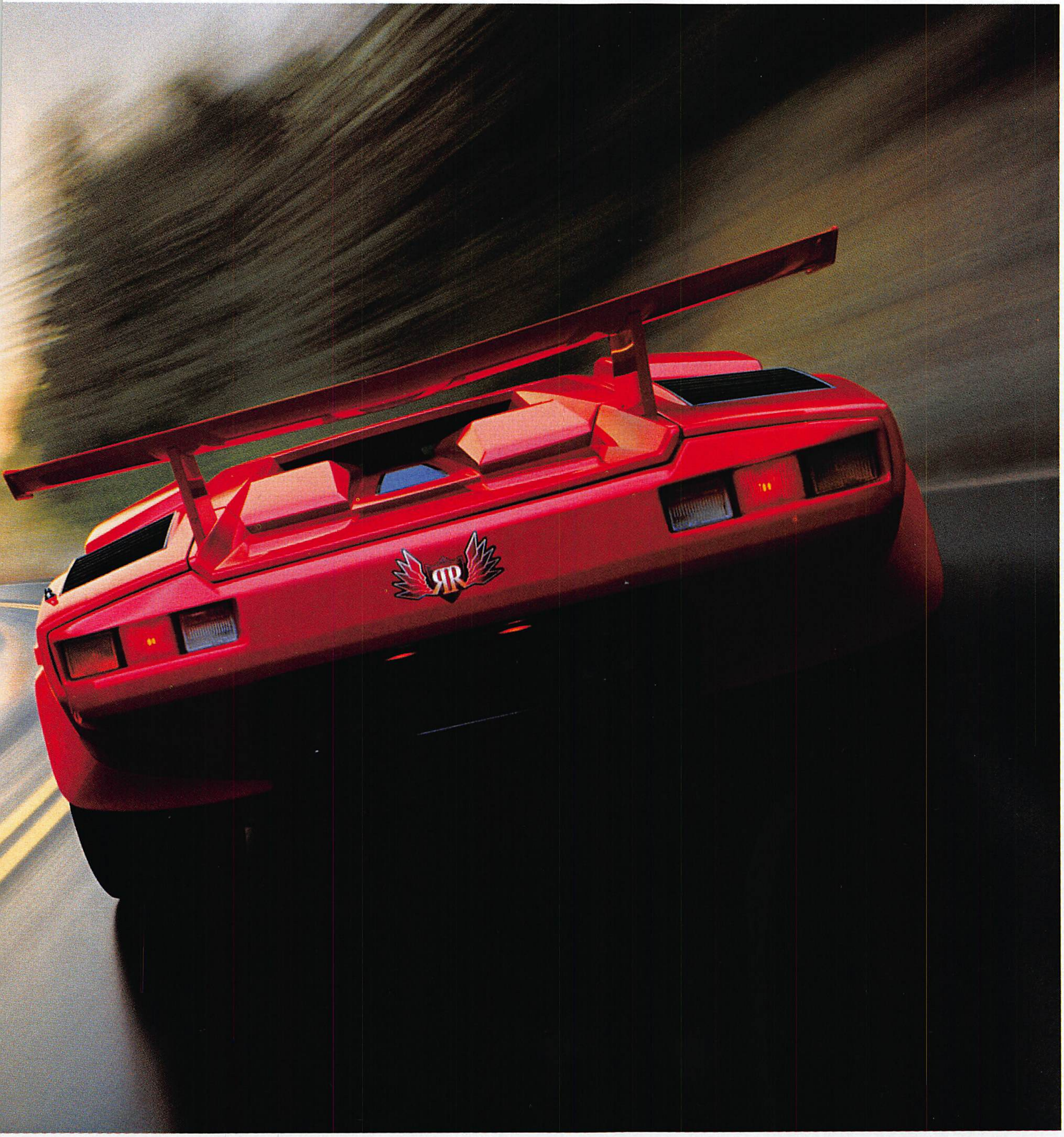
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Contents



Cover: MK MYTHOLOGIES 32

EDITORIAL ZONE	2
MOST WANTED/TOP TEN	10
DNN	14
VIEWPOINT	18
HOCUS POCUS	24
COVER STORY	32
PLAYSTATION NATION	36
NINTENDO 64 THEATER	58
SATURN SECTOR	68
GAMEFAN SPORTS	80
JAPAN NOW	86
QUARTER CRUNCHERS	98
ANIME FAN	102
OTHER STUFF	106
POSTMEISTER	110



MK MYTHOLOGIES 32

JERSEY DEVIL pg. 54



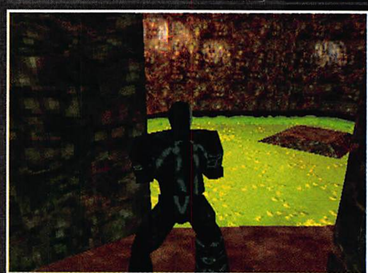
SONIC JAM pg. 68



TOBAL 2 p. 90



SPAWN pp. 56 & 107



ACE COMBAT 2	pg. 56
ALL STAR BASEBALL	pg. 85
ALUNDRA	pg. 92
BLASTO	pg. 55
BROKEN HELIX	pg. 38
CRASH 2	pg. 14
CRITICAL DEPTH	pg. 51
CROC	pg. 55
CYBERBOTS	pg. 70
DARK RIFT	pg. 64
DEATHTRAP DUNGEON	pg. 56
DRACULA 3D	pg. 66
DUKE NUKEM	pg. 66
DYNASTY WARRIORS	pg. 40
F1 POLE POSITION	pg. 67
GEX 2	pg. 57
GRAND SLAM	pg. 84
GRAND TOUR RACING '98	pg. 57
HERC'S ADVENTURE	pg. 49
HEXEN 2	pg. 55
HEXEN 64	pg. 62
JERSEY DEVIL	pg. 54
LAST BRONX	pg. 74
MACE: THE DARK AGE	pg. 66
MARVEL SUPER HEROES	pg. 48
MASS DESTRUCTION	pg. 73
METAL SLUG	pg. 94
MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE	pg. 67
MK4	pg. 33

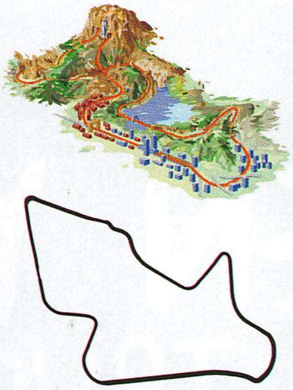


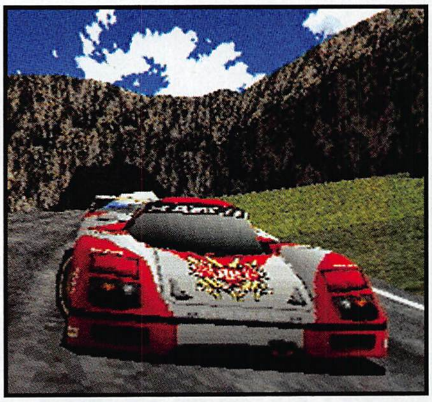
STARFOX 64 58

MK MYTHOLOGIES	pg. 33
NUCLEAR STRIKE	pg. 56
PANDEMONIUM	pg. 72
PITFALL 3D	pg. 57
POY POY	pg. 46
REBOOT	pg. 57
SKY TARGET	pg. 74
SONIC JAM	pg. 68
SPAWN	pg. 56
STARFOX 64	pg. 58
STEEL REIGN	pg. 53
SWAGMAN	pg. 36
TEKKEN 3	pg. 98
TIME CRISIS	pg. 55
TOBAL 2	pg. 90
TONIC TROUBLE	pg. 67
TOSHINDEN 3	pg. 42
TRIPLE PLAY	pg. 83
WARCRAFT II	pg. 50
WRECKIN' CREW	pg. 52

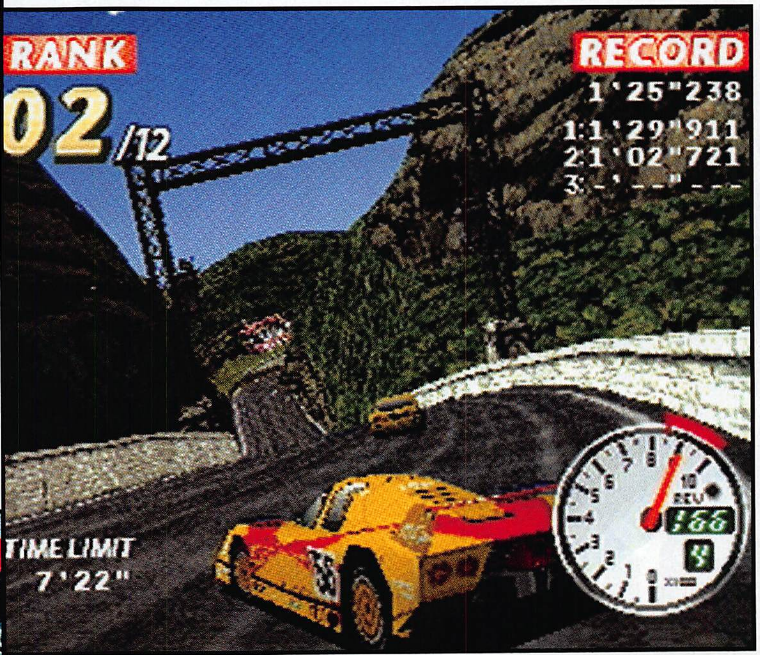
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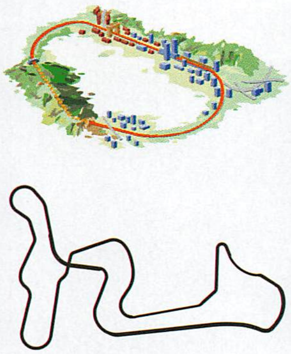




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Top 10 Most Wanted



READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Mario Kart 64* - N64
2. *WaveRace 64* - N64
3. *Super Mario 64* - N64
4. *Turok* - N64
5. *Tomb Raider* - PS/Saturn
6. *Star Wars: SOTE* - N64
7. *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* - N
8. *MegaMan 8* - PS
9. *Tekken 2* - PS
10. *Pilot Wings* - N64

1 Mario Kart 64
READERS' TOP TEN **N64**

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Zelda 64* - N64
2. *Yoshi's Island 64* - N64
3. *Golden Eye* - N64
4. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
5. *StarFox 64* - N64



6. *Resident Evil 2* - PS
7. *Tomb Raider 2* - PS
8. *Tekken 3* - PS
9. *Crash 2* - PS
10. *Mission: Impossible* - N6

GAMEFAN EDITOR'S TOP TEN



1. *StarFox 64 - N64*
2. *Castlevania X - PS*
3. *Alundra - PS*
4. *Swagman - PS*
5. *Tobal 2 - PS*
6. *Shining the Holy Ark - Saturn*
7. *Magical Hoppers - Saturn*
8. *Gamera 2000 - PS*
9. *Broken Helix - PS*
10. *Toshinden 3 - PS*



1. *Sonic Jam* - Saturn
2. *Tobal 2* - PS
3. *Virtual On Netlink* - Saturn
4. *Sega Rally Netlink* - Saturn
5. *StarFox 64* - N64
6. *Broken Helix* - PS
7. *Powerslave* - Saturn
8. *Poy Poy* - PS
9. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
10. *Iron Soldier 2* - Jaguar



1. *StarFox 64* - N64
2. *Sonic Jam* - Saturn
3. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
4. *Tobal 2* - PS
5. *Blast Corps* - N64
6. *Street Fighter III* - Arcade
7. *Poy Poy* - PS
8. *Hexen 64* - N64
9. *Daytona CE (Import)* - Saturn
10. *Sonic CD* - Sega CD



1. *StarFox 64* - N64
2. *Tail Of The Sun* - PS
3. *Tobal 2* - PS
4. *Blast Corps* - N64
5. *Rally Cross* - PS
6. *Jet Moto* - PS
7. *Street Fighter III* - Arcade
8. *Rush Hour* - PS
9. *Sonic Jam* - Saturn
10. *Turok* - N64



1. *StarFox 64* - N64
2. *Tobal 2* - PS
3. *Broken Helix* - PS
4. *Poy Poy* - PS
5. *Street Fighter III* - Arcade
6. *Bushido Blade* - PS
7. *Tekken 3* - Arcade
8. *Final Fantasy VII* - PS
9. *Street Fighter EX* - Arcade
10. *Super Mario Kart* - N64



1. *StarFox 64* - N64
2. *Sega Rally Netlink* - Saturn
3. *Virtual On Netlink* - Saturn
4. *Tobal 2* - PS
5. *Sonic Jam* - Saturn
6. *Poy Poy* - PS
7. *Daytona CE (Import)* - Saturn
8. *Night Warriors* - Saturn
9. *Dynasty Warriors* - PS
10. *Military Madness* -TurboDuo

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Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

DEVELOPER'S TOP TEN

This Month's Guest:
Ulrich Sledgemont
Designer, *Scream Software*

1. *StarFox 64* - N64
2. *Castlevania X* - PS
3. *Evangelion 2nd Impression* - SS
4. *Gamera 2000* - PS
5. *Tail of the Sun* - PS
6. *Doreamon 64* - N64
7. *Guardian Heroes* - SS
8. *Wario Land* - Virtual Boy
9. *Iron Soldier 2* - Jaguar CD
10. *Shining the Holy Ark* - SS





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-PS Extreme
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takes to conquer Metal Demons. And no, the ultimate goal of your quest is not to save the princess. It's to save the planet. Good luck. You're gonna need it.
PlayStation
AND, YOU'RE GOING DOWN WHETHER YOU'RE READY OR NOT
WILD ARMS
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CRASH BANDICOOT: GOING WHERE NO AMERICAN HERO HAS GONE BEFORE







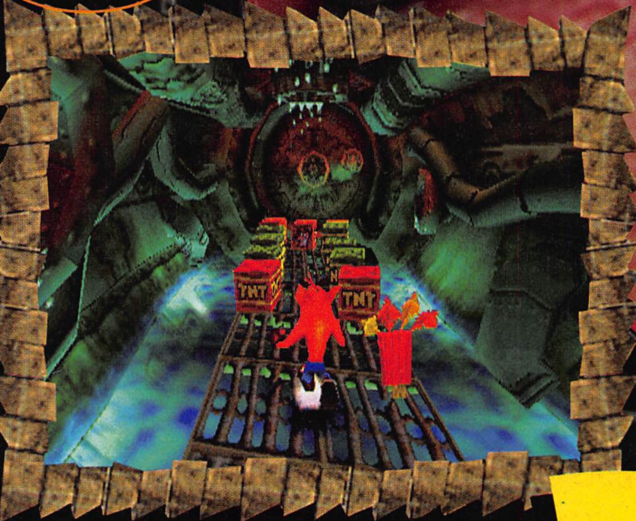






1. New music has been added to the bonus rounds (really good music) and Tawna disappears after you complete the round. 2.When Aku Aku crates are smashed they reveal his powers. 3. TNT crates are marked by a big black bomb.

With sales exceeding 450,000 in Japan (as of 4/26) and a worldwide mark of over 1.5 million, *Crash Bandicoot* has become the most widely accepted US-bred video game hero in Japan, perhaps ever. After its 3rd week on sale, *Crash Bandicoot* remains the only US-originated title on Famitsu's weekly top 30, a space normally occupied by games born in Japan. Additionally, Crash, along with rap star Parapa (of *Parapa the Rappa* fame) have become Sony's most recent spokescritters, taking center stage at the recent Tokyo Toy Show and appearing together in numerous trade and enthusiast game magazines as well as TV commercials. Speaking of TV commercials, the Japanese *Crash* TV ad is superb. It features the entire *Crash* cast in their own version of what could be considered the *Crash Macarena*. SCE has carefully orchestrated *Crash*'s rise to this level of success. The completely revamped marketing campaign and some subtle game changes along with *Crash*'s new, more, shall we say, streamlined look, have made *Crash*, an American game, a Japanese hit; a rare occurrence.



So it's fitting that while the original is still being enjoyed by hundreds of thousands we get our first glimpse of *Crash 2*. While little is officially known about part 2 much has been floating about game circles—like a camera that switches views as Crash back-tracks, new attacks, and things which can be ridden or flown. Of course none of this is concrete. While you'll get many a glimpse in lots of June game mags, GF will bring you the first complete in-depth game profile in our July *Crash 2* feature. In reference to one of the shots below, it's obvious that Crash now grapples and in a much wider environment which features a pipe ala' Mario in the floor which Crash may or may not ascend into or out of. One thing I *have* confirmed is that somehow *Crash 2* is even more visually spectacular than the original and that it is definitely not just more of the same. 8 levels will be playable at the E3 in June and you'll get a good look at those first 8 in the next issue. We may not have the first *Crash* cover story, but we'll definitely have the best *Crash* cover story. GF style in effect.

Perhaps I'll never live down giving *Crash* a perfect score, but even so, I still believe that, upon its debut, *Crash* was a flawless platformer and it remains the best one available today. If *Crash 2* breaks the boundaries forged in *1*, while retaining the perfect control, length, and staying power of the original, I may repeat, and give so many newsgroups fuel for the next Storm fry. I hope it tastes yummy. ***ES***



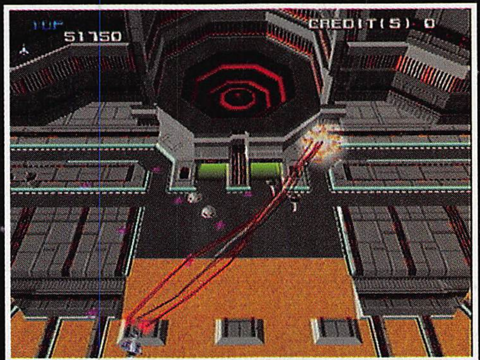




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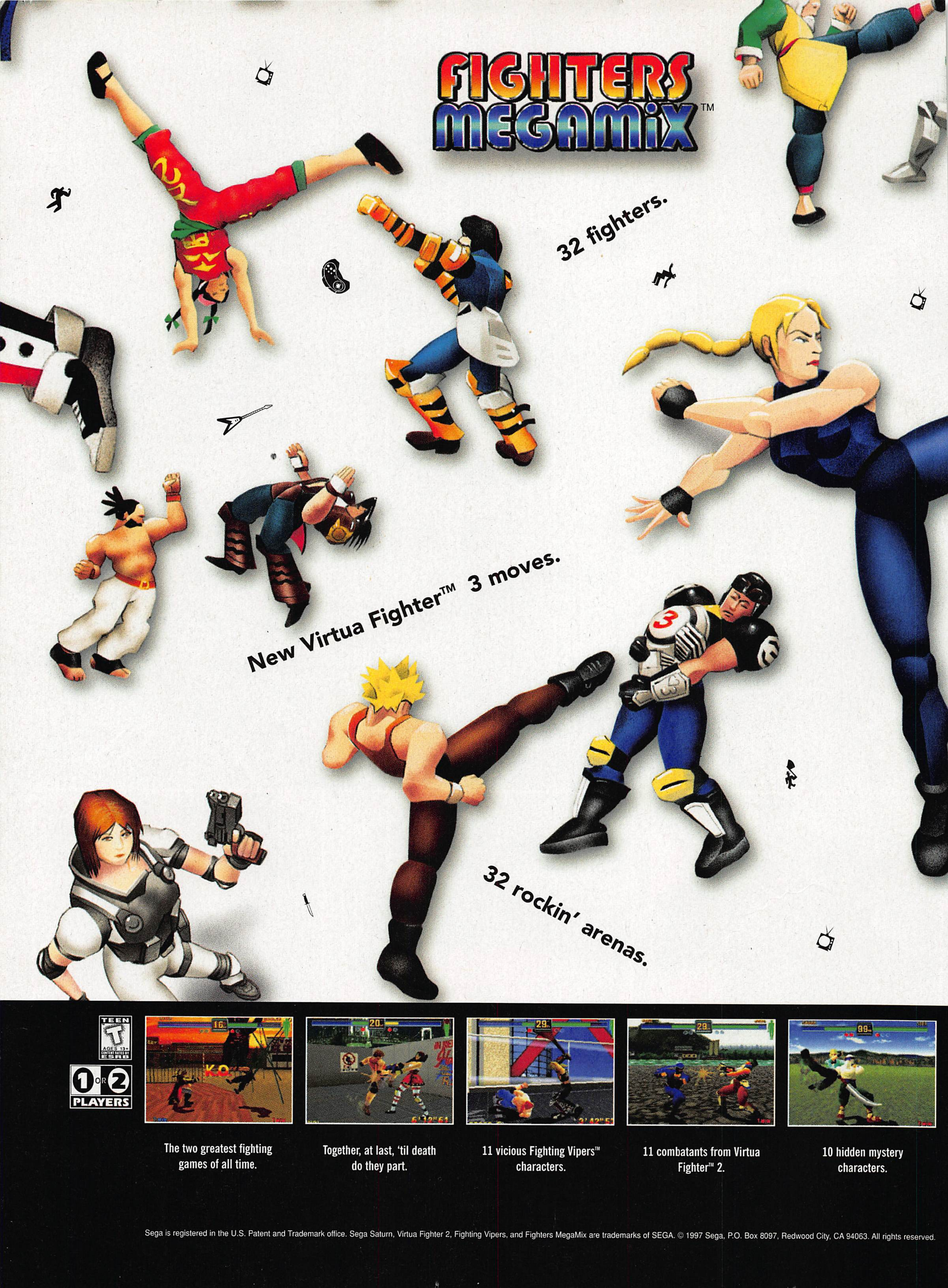
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VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



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STARFOX 64 - N64 GAME OF THE MONTH!



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GT INTERACTIVE
ACTION/ADVENTURE

Again, not my favorite genre and blah, blah, blah, but *Hexen* on N64 is solid. While I don't like its aesthetic as much as that of *Doom*, I could see how some would be drawn to its more medieval flavor. The level design is excellent and the inclusion of a four player split screen mode and the ability to play through a level cooperatively with a friend make *Hexen 64* a fine version of this PC classic. However, the non-configurable control makes strafing properly and using the analog stick a real pain.

G 8 | C 6 | P 8 | M 7 | O 7 | **80**

Hexen may have some control issues (Software Creations should be flogged for not allowing circular strafing with the analog stick), but the sheer genius of Raven Software's original game design still shines through. If you like corridor games and you've never played a version of *Hexen* before, then I highly recommend you give this a try. It may not be as pretty as *Doom* or *Turok*, but there's just much more meat on the gameplay bones. Plus the multiplayer mode is great chicken.

G 8 | C 7 | P 10 | M 6 | O 8 | **89**

This is the best console *Hexen* available. The 30 fps graphics are very pretty, mip-mapping and all, and the sound effects are fantastic, rivaling even the Saturn and PS versions. Sadly, movement could have been so much better if a control configuration option were present. The truly pathetic N64 d-pad can bite me, but I'm stuck with it if I want proper strafing...arrgh! Well, regardless, one has to appreciate the cunning level design of *Hexen*, the awesome medieval theme, and the beauteous degrees of carnage that can be attained (not to mention a great split-screen game). If *Turok* and *Doom* are in your library, make room for *Hexen*.

G 8 | C 7 | P 8 | M 3 | O 8 | **80**



STARFOX 64
NINTENDO 64
NINTENDO
SHOOTER

There's always something magical about the 1st time you lay hands on a game caressed by Miyamoto and company, and although that feeling creeps up on you as you unravel the vastness of *StarFox 64*, once it does, you'll be glued as you play over and over finding the game's many layers of depth. And the jolt pack... genius! I love it!! The music's a bit of a let down and there are some pop-up issues but otherwise SF64 is everything it's cracked up to be... spectacular.

G 9 | C 9 | P 9 | M 7 | O 8 | **95**

I loved the original *StarFox*, and I'm happy to report that *StarFox 64* is a worthy sequel. This is everything you could hope for in an update: sumptuous 30 fps visuals, 32 megs of sound, new vehicles, new levels and new modes of gameplay. The 'fly anywhere' stages are a great addition, and there's oodles of secrets to be discovered. Admittedly, the music is pretty weak, and the game has a few graphical issues, but overall there's no denying that this is quality fare. Yet another pedigree from the Miyamoto stable. Does the man ever stop?!?

G 9 | C 9 | P 9 | M 7 | O 9 | **94**

Having been a huge fan on the original *StarFox*, I was absolutely beside myself with anticipation for *SF64*. After the slight disappointment of *SMK* though, I learned to temper my enthusiasm. But my god, *StarFox 64* is good. This game obviously got Miyamoto's full attention. There is so much cool stuff to do and see in this game that I might even venture to say that it's one of the most fun shooters I've ever played. Even the four-player battle mode is pure, unadulterated dogfighting rapture. This is easily Nintendo's most ambitious and best title since *Mario 64*. And by the way, the jolt pack is awesome.

G 9 | C 9 | P 9 | M 7 | O 9 | **95**



DARK RIFT
NINTENDO 64
VIC TOKAI
FIGHTING

Although 32-bit looking in appearance (not necessarily a bad thing) *Dark Rift* is a solid 3D fighter. An excellent combo system, great characters, and some of the best music to spew forth from the N64 make it so. Playing like a combo between *SoulBlade* and *Fighting Vipers*, the game has good staying power, and if not for the mostly flat backgrounds and slightly chunky characters, would have the looks to match. Vic's done a great job with the emphasis on gameplay, opening the door for a sequel with graphic prowess.

G 7 | C 8 | P 8 | M 8 | O 7 | **78**

Is it wrong to make a game that doesn't push your system's limitations? With its 2D backdrops and stiff animation, *Dark Rift* looks more 32-bit than 64-bit. Kronos have wisely based their efforts on a good source—*SoulBlade*—and as a result the game plays pretty well. The 3D evasion sucks, but there are some cool character designs, and the combo system is well implemented. The best 3D fighter on N64 to date (i.e., it's better than *War Gods*).

G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 8 | O 6 | **80**

Dark Rift is everything I expected it to be...good *and* bad. First, the bad: Control issues. The 3D button, more specifically how quickly your character reacts to the button press, just plain sucks. O.K., that's it. Now the good: I like the combo system, responsive controls, and most of the characters are pretty cool (especially little Nikki, my fave). The music's some of the best I've heard on the '64, and 60 fps action does it for me any day. Not the most in-depth fighter, sure, but it still makes a great 2 player game.

G 8 | C 7 | P 7 | M 7 | O 8 | **82**



TOSHINDEN 3
PLAYSTATION
PLAYMATES
FIGHTING

Ranking graphically 2nd (behind *2*) and 1st among the available 3 in terms of gameplay, *Toshinden 3* is the *Toshinden* player's ultimate mix of excellent characters and gameplay to match. The new enclosed areas, added combo system and juggles, along with the sheer number of characters may even quiet some of *Toshinden*'s tough critics... but I doubt it. OK, so it's not *Tobal 2* (But what is? It's a miracle!), or a thoroughly polished Namco piece, it's still a good game, especially if you're into the series.

G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 8 | O 7 | **80**

I'm somewhat disappointed in Toshinden 3. Tamsoft has overhauled the game a little too much for me and some of the new characters have issues. I was also saddened to see that PIE didn't keep the Japanese voices like last time... some of the American voices REALLY made me wince. This is definitely a different *Toshinden* than the last time, and while you may more than enjoy the new feel of the game, it's not for me.

G 7 | C 6 | P 7 | M 6 | O 7 | **70**

Toshinden 3 is another poor example in a poor series. E.Storm may consider 3 to be the best *Toshinden*, which still isn't saying much, but I believe *Toshinden 2* to be vastly superior to *3*. *Toshinden 3*'s graphics are quite poor when compared side-by-side with its predecessor, and the concept of essentially palette-swapped foes is just lame, not to mention that some of the alter-ego character designs were *quite* a stretch... can you say "Atahua?" In addition, PIE further harmed the game by recording shockingly poor American voices... some of which are actually worse than *Toshinden 1*'s tragedies.

G 7 | C 5 | P 6 | M 5 | O 4 | **65**



RUSH HOUR
PLAYSTATION
PSYGNOSIS
RACING

When it comes to going around a track no one does it as much, or, lately, as good, as Psygnosis. The top-down approach gets the PS treatment this time out with huge layered (and seamless!) polygonal environments, a zooming helicopter point of view, and sporadic lighting FX. The control (with back to the center steering) is a joy as well, and the music's very good. The choice of Monster or High performance cars gives *RH* some nice diversity. This is a class act from start to finish and most importantly a refreshing entry into the overcrowded racing category.

G 8 | C 8 | P 7 | M 8 | O 8 | **80**

"Ok, ok, I'll put aside work to play this, this...*overhead racing game!!!* What do you mean? Of course I'll score it fairly *(snik, snik)*!" *(Hey, wait-a-minute, I'm startin' to like this... The control is, is, wow it's pretty cool!)* "What? Back to what? Work? Yeah, yeah, in a minute!" *(Damn! second place again!)* "Okay, yeah, I'll get to it in a second." *(That blasted..., I was ahead 'til that last turn...)* "Okay, 'bye. See you in the morning!" *(One more race and I'm outta here! Just gotta beat that blasted... What!? I made that turn... bu*

G 8 | C 9 | P 9 | M 8 | O 8 | **84**

Man, you don't see many racing games that use this perspective. Overhead racing games are few and far between in this country, and Psygnosis' *Rush Hour* just might turn a few people on to this style of video game racing. With a camera placed high above the action, it's as if you're controlling your car from a helicopter. The perspective allows for a very good view of everything and makes maneuvering through traffic and taking corners a blast. It almost gives me the feeling of a slot car race except that you have total control of your vehicle.

G 8 | C 8 | P 8 | M 7 | O 8 | **80**



BROKEN HELIX
PLAYSTATION
KONAMI
ACTION/ADVENTURE



This isn't necessarily my type of game and blah, blah, blah, but there is absolutely no denying the quality of the Konami US-developed *Broken Helix*. This is an ambitious title that manages to maintain an amazing sense of humor about itself. A truly clever script and super-cool Bruce Campbell providing the voice of your alter-ego come together to create genuine laughs. And aside from some wonky jumping, *BH* is immensely playable. Even the graphics impress with their persistence and vibrant, atmospheric lighting effects. Konami's on a roll, it would seem.

G 8 · C 7 · P 8 · M 8 · O 9 — **89**



Wow. Where did this one come from? With little or no hype, Konami has dropped on us an amazing 3D corridor/adventure with a solid 30 fps graphics engine, tight control, multiple story lines, 95 minutes of voice audio (!), 38 minutes of music, 56 CG cut-scenes, an adjustable camera and... Bruce Campbell! I love the way things happen in real-time. It adds so much to the experience. Konami has taken a big risk by producing something so unique, and it's paid off in spades. Broken, this isn't!

G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 10 · O 10 — **93**



Why the hell is *Broken Helix* so good? I think I know why: Bruce "The Main Man" Campbell. Wait a sec, sure his voice is incredibly cool, and the writing is perfect, but there's more to *Broken Helix* than just Bruce. Ah, yes, I know: this game rocks in every conceivable way! This is the first 'real-time' game to actually feel real-time. Loads of characters are always on the move, talking, progressing, *killing*, all within a huge, smooth, effects-ridden multi-level environment. Multiple paths, multiple endings, fantastic play-mechanics, an epic movie feel...it's amazing what Konami has accomplished here.

G 9 · C 8 · P 9 · M 9 · O 10 — **92**



XEVIOUS
PLAYSTATION
NAMCO
SHOOTER



Alas, poor *Xevious*, I knew him well. Why hast thy former glory been reduced to this near abomination? I can't quite figure out why Namco, one of the best 3D developers on the PS, would produce something so underwhelming. It's as if their collective heart just wasn't in it. I think Namco knew this, which is why there are three versions of the classic 2D *Xevious* included plus a goofy (though amusing) code that changes your ship model to either Heihachi Mishima or Paul Phoenix. Nice try, Namco, but you can't skirt the fact that *Xevious 3D/G+* just sort of blows, you know.

G 6 · C 7 · P 6 · M 6 · O 8 — **65**



I wonder if this was some sort of side project that someone at Namco was working on in their spare time? It certainly doesn't seem like one of their typically ambitious technological marvels. It's more of a curiosity really—as if the 3D version of *Xevious* was thrown into the museum collection as an afterthought. If you're really into classic *Xevious*, then you'll get your money's worth. If not, then get your nostalgia kicks elsewhere.

G 6 · C 8 · P 6 · M 6 · O 7 — **66**



When I sit down to play a shooter, I play religiously. So I sat down and played *Xevious 3D/G+*...and my beliefs were shattered. Seriously, this new *Xevious* is a real stinker. The graphics are simplistic and uninspired, but I can get over that fact. It's the gameplay that really kills me. If this game, and I mean the game itself, were a beautiful 2D shooter filled with glorious art, I still wouldn't give a crap. The enemy patterns are lame, the level structure is weak, and the whole experience screams *blah*. Cool tunes, and the classic games are decent, but if the 3D update is your buying motivation, forget it.

G 6 · C 8 · P 6 · M 8 · O 5 — **66**



DYNASTY WARRIORS
PLAYSTATION
KOEI
FIGHTING



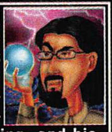
Dynasty Warriors has a smooth, solid feel. Excellent 60 fps polygons. Surprisingly everything's original too, despite the potential this game had to be a *Soul Edge* rip-off. Koei did their homework; you know, they researched weapons combat, fighting techniques, and probably with as much care and accuracy as their historical sims. This is reflected in the gameplay, which employs a finely-tuned parrying system and perfect weapon-to-weapon clashes, as well as effective counters. And with throws, supers, and nasty combos, *DW* ends up being an all-around kick-ass 3D fighter.

G 8 · C 9 · P 9 · M 8 · O 7 — **86**



Well here's a surprise. Koei's first foray into the world of 3D fighting games is actually pretty decent. The visuals may be genre-standard 2D backdrop/3D character fare, but a lot of effort has gone into making the gameplay something special. The countering/parrying system is excellent and as a result the fights are deeply strategic. It's not quite up there with the *Tekken 2*'s or *Tobal 2*'s of this world, but it's not half bad either. If you like the setting, you could do a lot worse than give it try.

G 7 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — **85**



What's that you say? A good fighting game from Koei? You're darn tootin'! *Dynasty Warriors* is an amazingly solid, 3D weapon-based fighter. With its innovative parry system, 60 fps character movement, subtle light sourcing, and historical backdrop, *DW* is a cut above. The tunes however are a bit lacking. ("Welcome to *Amazing Discoveries*!") Aside from this shortcoming, *DW* stands as one of the better 3D fighters available today.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 6 · O 8 — **89**



PANDEMONIUM
SATURN
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
3D PLATFORM



Am I completely and utterly amazed at how well this version turned out? Yep. I figured it would be a competent conversion, but miles away from the PS game. Seriously, stunning light-sourcing, transparencies, and a smooth frame rate? Saturn power! Ok, so here's the official retraction for the "wimpiest guts" comment I made in the *Bug Too!* review (Volume 4, Issue 12)... never again will I underestimate the power of the Saturn. After all, it looks like third parties are getting the hang of things, finally. Check out my review for details, I'm out of space.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — **83**



I was a big fan of PS *Pandemonium* when it came out last year, and I'm shocked at how good this conversion is. I guess I should have more faith in my Saturn. *Pandemonium* is the grandaddy of the 2.5D genre, combining hardcore 2D platform action with lush 3D polygon environments, awesome lighting effects and sweeping camera angles. It's taken a while, but finally Saturn owners will get a chance to experience total *Pandemonium* for themselves.

G 8 · C 8 · P 9 · M 8 · O 8 — **88**



Minus some light sourcing and background detail, *Pandemonium* has actually been squeezed onto the Saturn! The huge polygonal environments that make up this platform feast have been left completely intact. A welcome game on the SS, as a solid platformer was sorely needed; it doesn't get much better. *Pandemonium* is long, has towering bosses, a quality soundtrack and hidden agendas in nearly every level. Saturn fans should jump all over this one.

G 8 · C 9 · P 7 · M 8 · O 8 — **85**



MASS DESTRUCTION
SATURN
BMG
ACTION/ADVENTURE



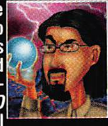
You own a Saturn, you love shooters. Me, too. Play *Mass Destruction*. Point #1: 60 fps rules, anytime, anywhere. *Mass D* is blindingly smooth, littered with chaos, and never slows down. Point #2: Excellent graphics. The explosions are awesome, and the enemies and obstacles are colorful and unique. Point #3: Great gameplay and level design. The tank control couldn't be better, the power ups rock, and every level is worth your time. I recommend this obscure title to all shooter fans.

G 8 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 8 — **84**



As the name suggest, this game is all about blowing things up. If that sounds good to you, then you're going to be in seventh heaven with *Mass Destruction*. It's like *Soviet Strike* in a tank without the strategy! The control is tight, the action is intense, and you've just gotta love a game that runs at 60 fps... in hi-res! Cool weapons, cool tunes, BIG carnage—*Mass Destruction*!

G 8 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 6 — **84**



Using a perspective that gives the game a ballpark resemblance to *Return Fire*, *Mass Destruction* is really a completely different kind of game. Instead of a capture-the-flag type of objective, *Mass D* is set up more like your typical search-and-destroy. The overhead look and the cute little models of everything come together to create a look that's at once practical and visually appealing. With infallible control and a smooth, constant frame rate, *Mass D* is simply a good little game.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — **82**



CYBERBOTS
SATURN
CAPCOM
FIGHTING



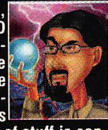
Let it be known: Evil Rox doesn't like mecha. Let it be known doubly: Evil Rox loves Capcom. Evil Rox therefore forced himself to play Capcom's latest conversion, and his opinions are mixed. Clearly, *Cyberbots* is gorgeous, especially with the RAM cart, and I could forgive the lack of hardcore Capcom characters (except the pilots, rendered beautifully by Kinu) if the gameplay was fantastic, but unfortunately it isn't. Don't get me wrong, it is very good, certainly better than most other pap that graces the shelves, but it can't compare to Capcom's other series. Perhaps that's why *Cyberbots* all but failed in arcades. Yet, for the price of a home game, *Cyberbots* is worth trying.

G 9 · C 7 · P 7 · M 6 · O 8 — **80**



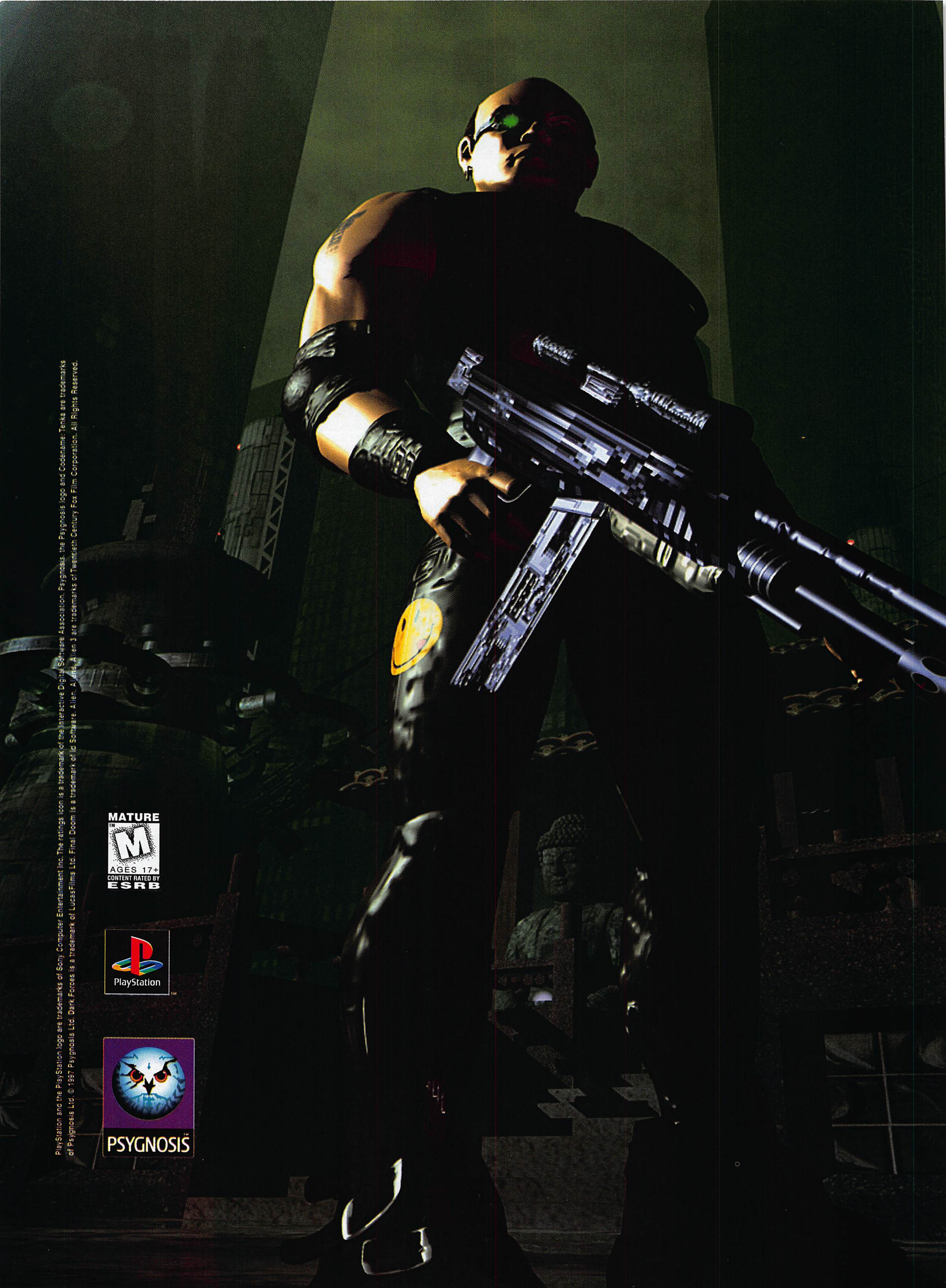
Cyberbots may not exactly be the most precise fighting game ever created, but that's all part of its charm. The insane 2D graphics (with the RAM cart) perfectly compliment the chunky, over-the-top fighting action; and with only four buttons to speak of it's definitely Capcom's biggest departure from the *SF* formula yet. Besides, who can resist the prospect of controlling a 100 ft. tall rendered Zero Gouki. A great conversion of a good beat-'em-up. Now let's hope Sega or Capcom bring the RAM cart out over here.

G 9 · C 8 · P 9 · M 7 · O 8 — **89**



Perhaps possible only on Saturn, Capcom's *Cyberbots* is absolute 2D madness. Using the optional memory cartridge, the 'Bots animate beautifully and the incredibly active and well drawn backgrounds literally sparkle with Capcom quality. This is a really kinetic game as all kinds of stuff is constantly happening, whether it's the animation in the background or the multitude of insane moves each character possesses. And exclusive to this version is the awesome looking rendered Zero Gouki as a hidden character. Another typically high quality Capcom conversion.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 8 · O 8 — **88**



MATURE
M
AGES 17+
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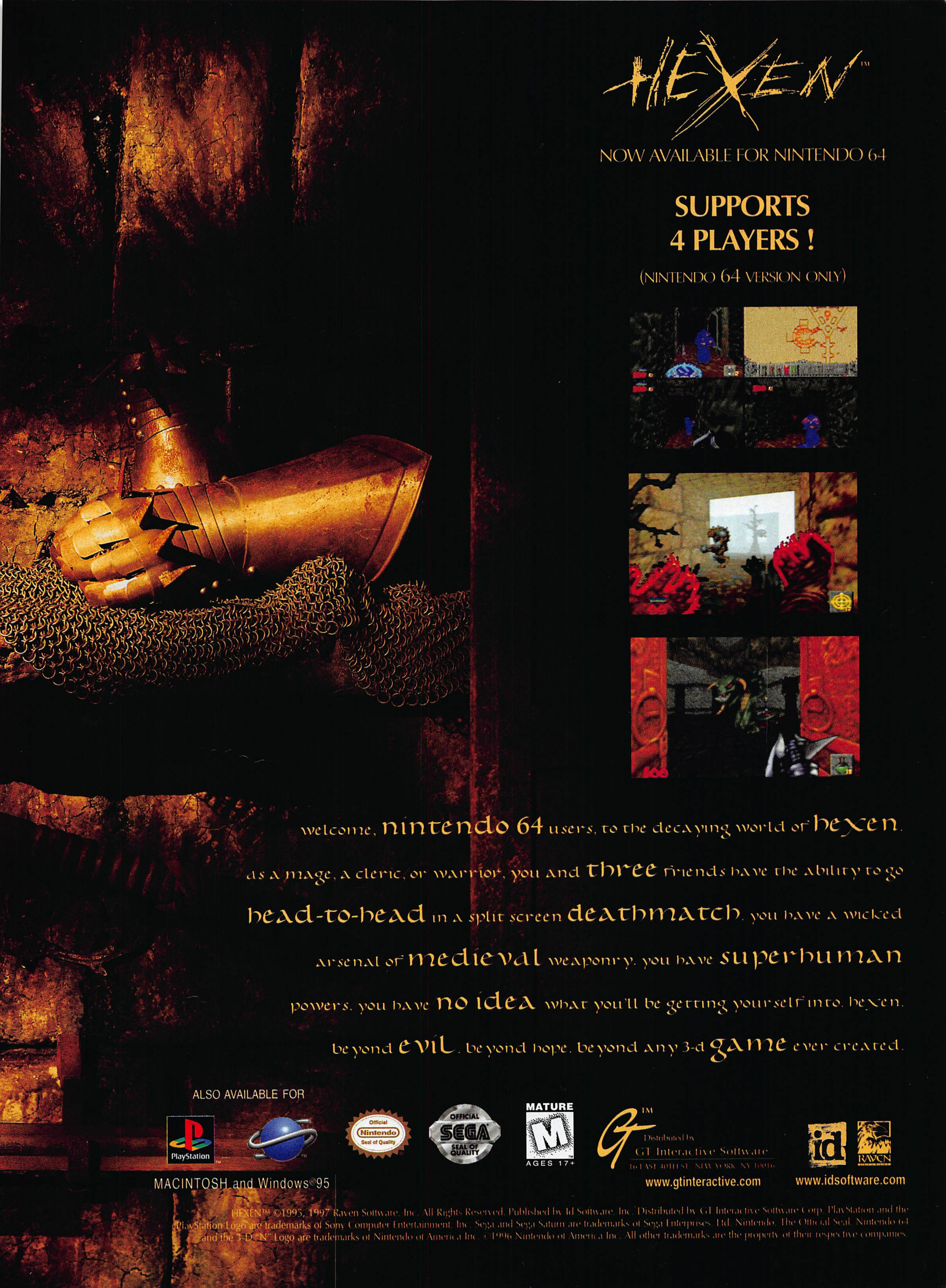
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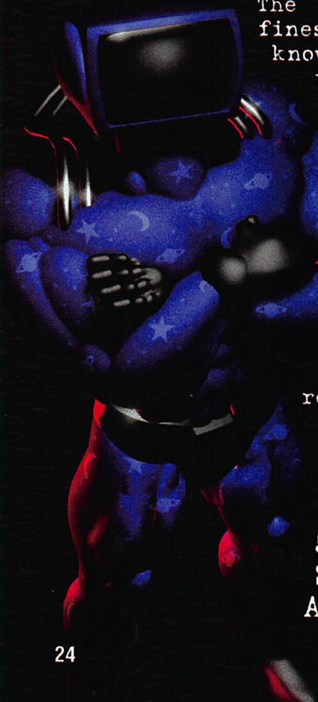
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DYNASTY WARRIORS
Secret Character Code!



To play as Sun Shang Xiang, highlight '1P Battle' at the title screen and input the following:
⇦, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, ▲, ■, **L1, R1**
If you're having trouble beating the game, she might be your ticket to success. Her moves are almost identical to Zhou Yu, 'cept she's a little faster.



XEVIOUS 3D/G+ (import)
Play as Paul & Heihachi!



Player One: Heihachi:
At the Xevious 3D/G+ title screen press and hold
⇦, ✖, ● **& start** until you see your ship become Heihachi.

Player Two: Paul:
At the Xevious 3D/G+ title screen press and hold
⇨, ✖, ● **& start** until you see your ship become Paul.
(Paul's waaaaaay too fast!)



MANX TT
Sheep Code!



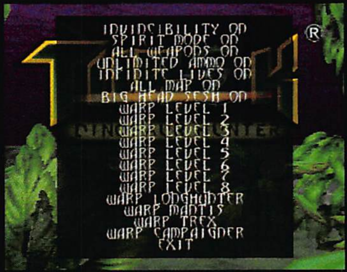
Seeing is believing and these shots don't lie. Jump on a sheep and hit the concrete pasture! At the "select transmission" screen (above), input the following:
⇧, ⇧, ⇩, ⇩, ⇦, ⇨, **Z, Y**
If done correctly, you'll hear a sheep sound loud 'n clear. Now burn wool!



TUROK: DINOSAUR HUNTER
The only code you need!



O.K., finally, here it is: The ultimate Turok code. This one will open up absolutely every cheat in the game. It's about time somebody found this one! At the password input screen, punch in the following:
NTHGTHDGDCRTDTRK
"On the eighth day, god created Turok"...indeed.



POWERSLAVE
Full Ammo, Full Life, Level Skip!

* Thanks to Dominick and all at Lobotomy for these awesome codes!



All of these codes must be entered on the overworld map screen, see above.

All Ammo and Full life: Enter
⇩, ⇨, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, ⇨, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, ⇨, ⇦, ⇩, ⇧, ⇦
Then, to fill 'er up when you're getting low, go to the items screen and press **X**. Easy money.

Level Skip:
Y, Y, Z, Z, X, X, Z, Y, X, Z, Y, X, Y, X, Z
Enter this code again and again to access level after level.

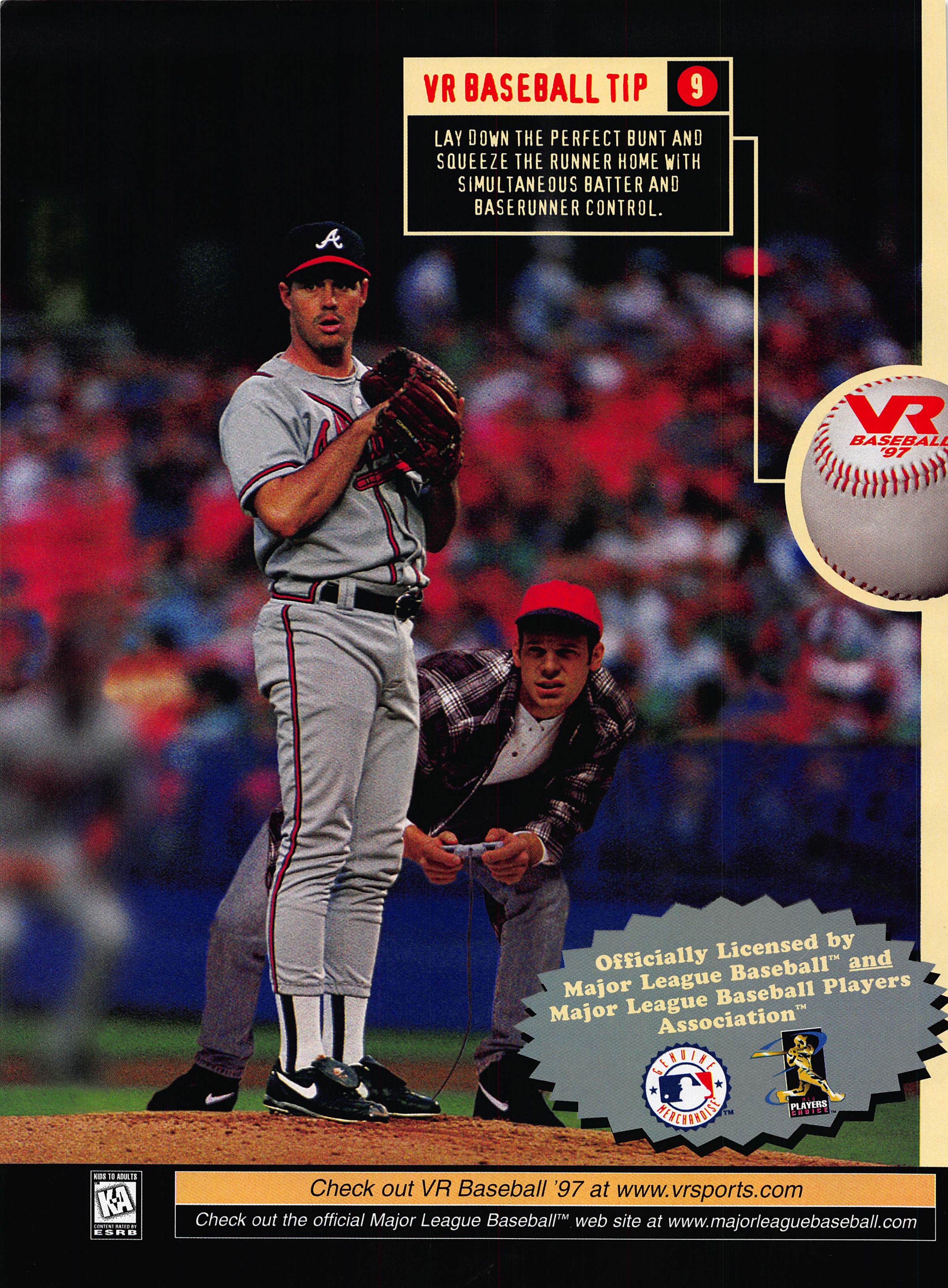
Pillar Drop in the Final Level:
Z, X, Y, Y, X, Y, X, X, Y, Z, Z, Y, X, Z, A
Anyone who knows PowerSlave will appreciate this great cheat.





GO HERE, HIT "X"




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Check out the official Major League Baseball™ web site at www.majorleaguebaseball.com

MAINTAIN CONTROL MARCH 25TH

NEW! VR BASEBALL™ '97.

MORE CONTROL THAN ANY OTHER BASEBALL GAME!

VR Baseball '97 is the next generation baseball game that lets you control both the batter and baserunners simultaneously. Hit and run, tag up, steal, stretch out a double or execute a squeeze play. VR Baseball's completely new, easy-to-use controller design provides total bat control for power, contact, bunt and pull-hitting as well as control over pitch selection and speed with unlimited pitch locations. You can even control a real 3-D camera that let's you play from any position or angle because only VR Baseball has a true 3-D engine.

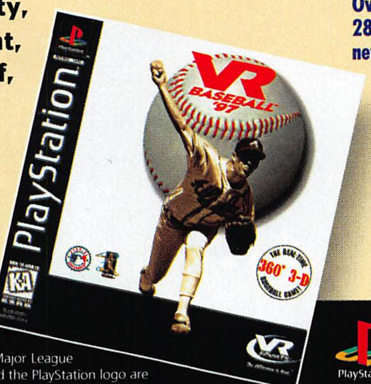
After 3 years of internal development and a total commitment to quality, VR Sports delivers a winning roster for the '97 season:

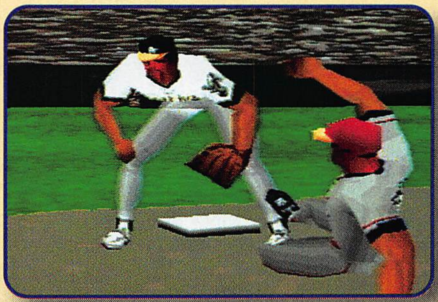
- **Virtual FieldVision™ technology creates an immersive, ultra-realistic, gaming environment that lets you play the game from any view or perspective. You can even play from the ball's view if you don't mind getting knocked around.**
- **Four uniform options per team including updated colors and team logos for 1997. Plus, four play options and three difficulty settings for the skill level most challenging to you.**
- **Instant access to pitch selection, speed and control for unlimited plate locations without menus. Total bat control for power, contact, bunt and pull-hitting without tipping your hand to your opponent.**
- **Super-fast Season Play mode with top 10 or full stats. Plus, mid-season All-Star voting and game.**

***Plus*, a true physics model controls velocity, rotation, gravity and air friction for true flight, bounce and roll for varying surfaces like Astroturf, grass, dirt and fences.**

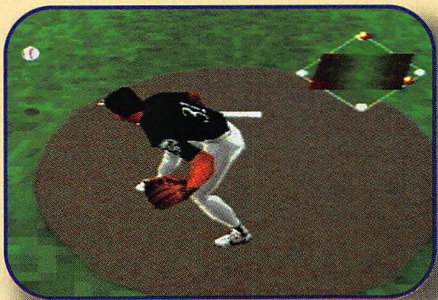
VR Baseball '97

Try it. It's new. It's different. You may never go back to your old game again.

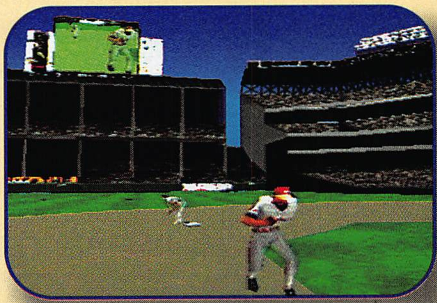




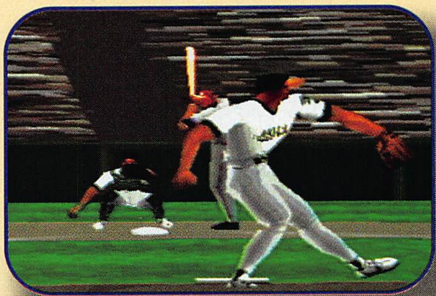
Total control over all aspects of game play including simultaneous batter and baserunner control.



Play baseball in a true real-time 3-D world with unlimited 360° views and motion captured polygon models for all players.



Updated stats, rosters, uniform styles, logos and inter-league play with a real-time in stadium scoreboard and big screen in stadium television.



Over 700 Major League Baseball™ Players and all 28 3-D Major League Baseball™ stadiums including three new stadiums: Atlanta, Anaheim and Oakland.

VR SPORTS™

The Difference Is Real.™

PlayStation™

COMING SOON!!!

DIE HARD ARCADE
New Music, Hard-Core Mode, and Hyper DeepScan!







New Music Code:
At the main menu, put the cursor on Die Hard and hold **X, Y,** and **Z** then press **start**, and listen carefully.

So, Die Hard Arcade is too easy for you, huh? Try Hard-Core Mode:
Put the cursor over Die Hard again, hold **X, Y, Z, B,** and press **start**. Now try 4 credits and brutal enemies on for size, you tough guys! (or, pardon me, tough gals!)

Hyper Deepscan:
This time stick the cursor next to Deepscan. Hold **X, Y, Z,** and press **start**. Now be prepared for Hyper Deepscan (check out the shot), a mad-man's version of the credit building sub-game.

Faster Hyper Deepscan:
Ha! Insane! Give it a try: With the cursor on Deepscan again, hold **X, Y, Z, B,** and press **start**.

Super Hyper Deepscan Turbo 2:
Put the cursor over Deepscan and execute two reverse fireballs while holding... Nah, just kiddin' (I had to do it!).

DOOM 64
"Features" Password!



For those of you who can't cope with the copious amounts of enemies in Doom 64, we give you the Features Password...

?TJL BDFW BFGV JVV.
(don't forget the period)

Need we say more?



RALLY CROSS
Playin' With Physics!



Enter At Above Screen:
FEATHER: Light Cars
RADBRAD: Heavy Cars
FLOAT: Super Light Cars
STONE: Super Heavy Cars
NO WHEELS: No Wheels On Cars
WHEELS: No Bodies On Cars
SPINNER: Tighter Turning
VET ME: Veteran Level
IAMPRO: Pro Level



NANOTEK WARRIOR
Mass Destruction, Full Shields, and Warp Speed!



Mass Destruction:
How would you like to blow up almost anything in this tough shooter? With this cool cheat, nearly every object in the game can be destroyed. Just pause the game anytime, and input the following:
■, ●, R2, R2, ⇦, ⇧, ⇩, ✖
(How cool is that?!)

TRY OUT THESE CODES TOO:

Stop Ship:
▲, ⇦, ▲, ⇨, ▲, ⇧, ▲, start

Full Shield:
select, ●, ⇨, ⇧, ⇧, L1, L1, ✖

Warp Boost:
●, ■, ●, ■, ▲, ▲, ▲, X

Save Game:
⇦, ⇨, ⇦, ⇦, R2, ●, L1, X
Quit a game when you feel like saving, and presto, a 5-slot save screen appears!

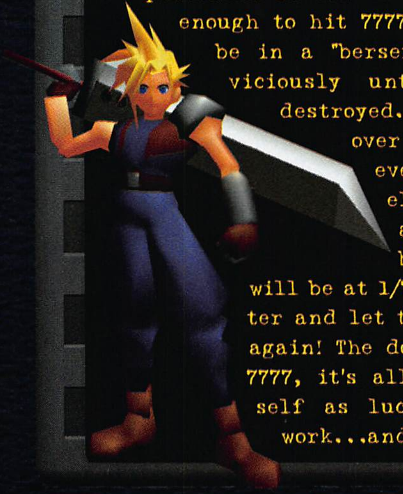
Random Curving:
●, select, ⇦, ■, ■, ⇩, ⇧, X
The tube curves randomly.

"Semi-Cockpit" Mode:
▲, ●, ■, ■, ▲, ▲, select, start
A cool first person mode.

Random Enemy Positions:
R1, R1, ⇧, ●, ■, ▲, L2, ✖

FINAL FANTASY VII
"All-Seven Fever"





First, get your character to 7777 hit points. It's tricky, but with strategic Materia placement it can be done. If you're lucky enough to hit 7777, your character will be in a "berserker" mode, attacking viciously until every enemy is destroyed. You'll be taking off over 9999 hitpoints with every hit, and no one else can attack, so it's a sure bet! After the battle your hitpoints will be at 1/7777. Cure your character and let the "All 7 fever" begin again! The downside: Once you pass 7777, it's all over. So count yourself as lucky if you get it to work...and enjoy the fever!

VANDAL HEARTS
Level-Up Cheat!



Remember the battle right before the big Magnus confrontation? It's the battlefield with two elevators and two healing circles. Before the fight, make sure everyone *except Ash* is stocked with Mage Oils. Clear out the monsters, but have Sara stand on a healing circle, casting Mystic Shield repeatedly, instead of leaving. Keep it up 'til she maxes out at level 49. Now have Huxley cast Mystic Shields on Sara and his level will also jump up to 49. Have everyone else (except Ash!) use their mage oils on Sara and Huxley and if you're lucky their levels will max-out too. Although Ash has to level-up legitimately, your party will kick ass. Cool trick!

EVEN MORE CHEATS, PASSWORDS, AND UH...STUFF!

SOVIET STRIKE - SEGA SATURN
LEVEL PASSWORDS AND SECRET CODES

Levels:
Crimea....................MAROZ
Black Sea.................KRAZHA
Khyber...................VERBLUD
Dracula...................YADRO
Kremlin...............PERIWOROT

Secret Codes:
Unlimited Fuel........COLDPIZZA
One Extra Life..........FREEBIE
Four Extra Lives..........VOODOO
4X Weapon Power.........GABRIEL
1/2-Speed Fuel Usage...ALBATROSS

WAR GODS - NINTENDO 64
FREE PLAY AND CHEAT MENU

At the title screen, input the following:
Free Play: **C⇦, C⇦, R, A, B, C⇧, C⇨**
CHEAT MENU: **R, R, R, B, B, A, A**

BUG TOO! - SEGA SATURN
LEVEL SELECT, FLYING, INVULNERABILITY

Use d-pad for N (up), S (down), E (right), and W (left) with the buttons to spell the following (enter while game is paused):
Level Select........**LAZY WEASEL**
Fly Around.............**LAWLESS**
Invulnerable.........**REAL EASY**

DOOM - SEGA SATURN
GOD MODE

While game is paused, press
⇩, Y, X, R, ⇨, L, ⇦, B
Now enjoy this turd without ever dying again!

WAYNE GRETZKY HOCKEY - NINTENDO 64
NON-STOP FIGHTING!

At the Options screen, hold L and press the following sequence on the **C buttons:** ⇨, ⇦, ⇦, ⇨, ⇩, ⇧, ⇧, ⇩, ⇦, ⇨, ⇨, ⇦, ⇨, ⇦
If it worked you should be getting into a fight every 5 to 20 seconds!

GAME SHARK INSANITY!
NEED FOR SPEED 2(PS)

Bonus Track & Car....800E292A 0803

Street Fighter Alpha 2 (PS)

Infinite taunts P1....8019830A 0100
Infinite taunts P2....8019869E 0100
Multi-projectiles P1...801983D4 0000
Multi-projectiles P2...80198768 0000
Infinite Customs P1..80198434 9000
....................80198436 0090
Infinite Customs P2..801987C8 9000
....................801987CA 0090
Mid-air Specials P1..801981D8 0000
Mid-air Specials P2..801985C6 0000

HEXEN
Cheat Menu, Glitchy Link-Up!



To get into the cheat menu, do the following sequence at the Option screen:
⇧, ⇩, ⇦, ⇨, Y, Y, Z, Z, A, X, ⇧, ⇩, C, B
This code even opens up the Link-up mode! If both linked players hit 'A' simultaneously at the final selection screen (right before "attempting link-up"), it should work for you. It's buggy and problematic, but hey, it's Link-Up Hexen on your Saturn!



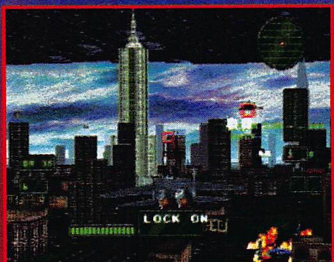

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$10.00 Mail-in Rebate with Orbitz® Beverages.*†
$25.00 Mail-in Rebate on the Samsung GXTV.*††
$5.00 Mail-in Rebate on the Die Hard Trilogy™.*†††
FOX INTERACTIVE
KIDS TO ADULTS K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
* Multiple proofs required. Valid only in U.S.A. † Expires May 15, 1997. †† Expires June 30, 1997. ††† Expires December 31, 1997
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THE FATE OF THE WORLD IS IN YOUR HANDS!

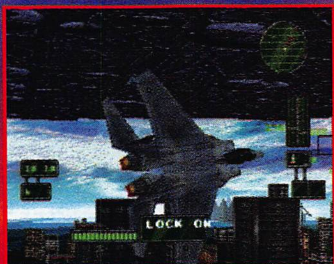
You're in the cockpit against Earth's deadliest menace in this high-tech flight-based game with blazing arcade thrills. Battle alien attack fighters as you obliterate the City Destroyers deployed overhead by the massive Alien Mothership. As your mission progresses from city to city, you fly faster and more heavily-armed planes, from the F-18 Hornet to the captured alien fighter from Area 51, building to a death-defying climax in a whiplash-paced assault inside the Mothership!

INDEPENDENCE DAY™

DON'T CHOKE...THE WORLD IS COUNTING ON YOU!



Fly over 15 of the hottest fighter planes including F-18s, Soviet MIGs and Alien Attackers.



Blast your way through over a dozen missions that take you from the Grand Canyon, to Tokyo, to Paris.

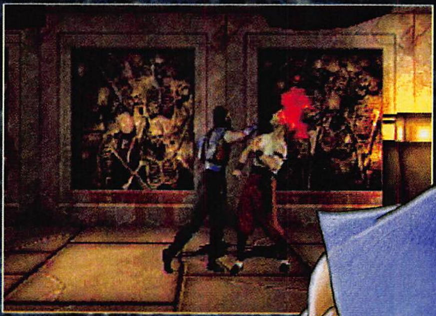


Multi-player capabilities provide head-to-head combat.

MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES

SUB-ZERO

THE KOMBATANTS RETURN IN AN ALL-NEW SIDE-SCROLLING SCENARIO!









Set over eight different (& vast) worlds, *MK Mythologies: Sub Zero* is a side-scrolling action/adventure that features 2D *MK* characters imposed over 3D polygonal backgrounds. The adventure elements are supplied by the occasional item or puzzle (i.e. freeze an enemy then push them onto a switch), and your ability to take multiple paths through a level. We know the levels are many screens high, but we've also been told of Bug style 'into the screen' paths that break up the side scrolling action.

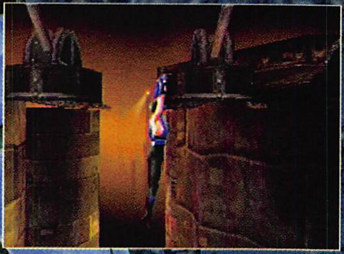
Despite these RPG trimmings, the emphasis in *Mythologies* is placed squarely on action. Control of Sub Zero is identical to any previous MK game, right down to having to press UP to jump. This may not be practical for the platform sections, but it means that MK fans will be instantly at home with the controls. Sub Zero has all his special moves from previous MK games, and combat takes place

MORTAL KOMBAT VETERANS AND NEW WARRIORS CLASH! PLATFORM ACTION WITH THE ORIGINAL MK CONTROL!







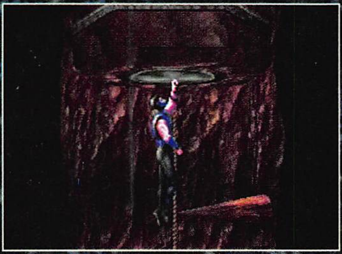


PREVIEW

DEVELOPER - MIDWAY	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - N/A



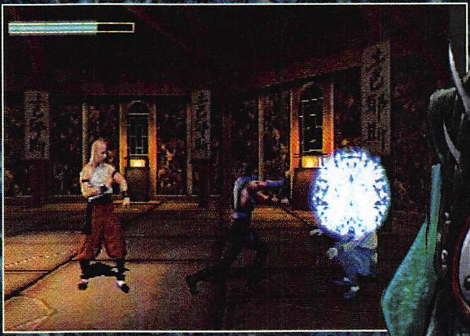
KNIGHTMARE
The devil's throwing snowballs...



3D BACKDROPS BRING THE NETHERWORLD TO LIFE! THE MORTAL KOMBAT UNIVERSE AS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE!

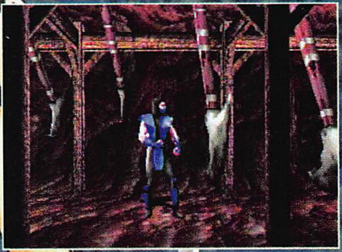
exactly as it would in regular *MK*—just in slightly more dangerous environments. Knock an enemy into one the many level obstacles (such as swinging blades or crushing pillars) and watch the blood fly! As you progress through the levels you will encounter over 30 enemies, which range from low level grunts (bald soldiers who only take a couple of hits to kill) to familiar *MK* characters to fearsome polygonal bosses.

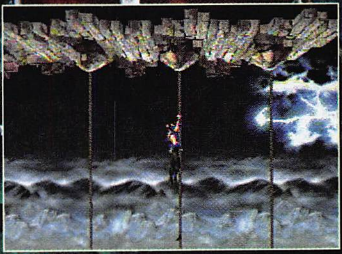




Graphically, what we've seen so far looks very promising indeed. The 3D backdrops are incredibly detailed and benefit from some impressive lighting effects, while the 2D characters interact seamlessly with the polygon environments. The camera zooms in and out to give you a better view of the area you are tackling, and there are even some *Pandemonium*-style camera sweeps when the level path veers off into, or out of, the screen.

The events in *MK Mythologies* take place before the original *MK* tournament, and chronicle the story of Sub Zero's involvement with a group of characters called the Elder Gods, ultimately leading to his untimely demise at the hands of Scorpion. *MK* fans will be glad to know that *Mythologies* retains the same look and feel of previous *MK* games (and that includes the gore) but in my opinion, it looks better than any of its predecessors. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm actually looking forward to an *MK* game. I guess hell just froze over. **K**



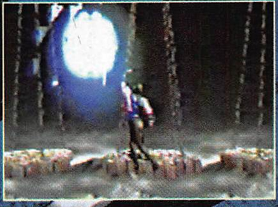




MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES: THE NEXT MK SMASH!







MORTAL KOMBAT MYTHOLOGIES

THE INTERVIEW

Recently Knightmare spoke with Mortal Kombat's creators, John Tobias and Ed Boon, about MK4, Mortal Kombat Mythologies, and life in general.

MORTAL KOMBAT 4

GF: How long has MK4 been in development?

EB: Well, conceptually, it's been in development since *MK3* finished. But we didn't get the hardware done till about November of last year.

GF: When do you hope to debut the game to the public?

EB: We want to test it mid to late summer. You know, June to July.

GF: How many guys do you have working on it?

EB: It's the exact same team who did the previous MK with the addition of Mike Boon, my brother, who's programming and a guy named Todd Allen who also is programming. He worked on some previous Midway games like *NARC* and *Terminator 2*.

GF: Can you tell us a bit about the game's story?

EB: Well as with all the *MK* games, John usually dictates the story.

JT: *MK4* actually ties in with the story from *Mythologies*. *Mythologies* takes place as a prequel to the first *MK*, and we introduce characters and a set of villains that predate the more recent *MK* games. The story centers around a group of characters we call the Elder Gods and the problems Rayden is having with them. It doesn't necessarily center around a tournament this time. The story goes further back than Shao Khan.

GF: So the Elder Gods turn up in both MK Mythologies and MK4?

JT: They turn up in some form in *MK Mythologies*.

GF: Approximately how many characters are you hoping to include? How many old and how many new?

EB: The final number isn't fixed yet, but roughly speaking, we're shooting for between twelve to fifteen characters, with half being old and half being new.

GF: Can you tell us about any of the new characters? Do they have anything to do with the MK: Annihilation movie?

EB: Actually, there's a character from the movie that's gonna be in both games. At the moment he's developed a lot more story-wise than he is gameplay-wise.

GF: Have you decided who the main villain is going to be yet?

EB: Believe it or not, we haven't! There are quite a few villains that have been developed in *Mythologies* that we're borrowing for *MK4*, but what role they play is probably going to be determined in the later part of the cycle.

GF: Can you be any more specific?

EB: Well there is a bad Elder God, not all the Elder Gods are good, and it kind of centers around that.

GF: Tell us about the hardware that MK4 is running on.

EB: It's very similar to the specs you already printed. It's called Zeus, it was designed by a guy named Mark Loffredo, who did all our previous hardware. It can put out over a million polygons per second. It has a lot of lighting effects and other types of shading for a realistic look. We have over 3000 polygons per character, so the game doesn't look polygonal at all. It just looks like digitized guys moving in 3D space.

GF: What resolution and frame rate is MK4 currently running at?

EB: It's running at 60 fps and we haven't pinpointed down a final resolution yet.

GF: Is it possible to create outlandish creatures like Goro, Kintaro and Motaro convincingly using this hardware?

EB: Oh yeah, that's absolutely possible.

GF: Have you got any characters like that in MK4?

EB: Not yet. Like I said we haven't done all the characters yet. But it's possible.

GF: How will making the leap to 3D effect Mortal Kombat's gameplay?

EB: Pretty dramatically. The plan is to keep the elements that players liked about the 2D stuff while at the same time introducing a whole new set of new moves that will be activated with certain commands. We are introducing a major step up in gameplay that hasn't existed in any other fighting game.

GF: What's that?

EB: We can't say. But when we go on test that's all your going to be hearing about.

GF: Does it have anything to do with parries or counter moves?

EB: Uhhhh, very possibly...

GF: Will MK4 take advantage of the 3D play field?

ED: It's gonna be a hybrid of the two (2D & 3D).

GF: Are you keeping the block and the run buttons?

EB: Yes!

GF: Will MK experts be able to just pick up and play MK4 like any other MK game?

EB: They're gonna know how to play the game, but once they discover this new mode of play that we're going to be introducing, it's gonna be a learning curve for them. But they'll still be so familiar with the basics of *MK*.

GF: Now that all the characters are made of polygons, will you include cheat codes to do things like big/tiny heads, etc.?

EB: Yeah, we are playing with those ideas.

GF: We've heard talk that there are going to be no fatalities in MK4? Is this true?

EB: We never said that there weren't going to be fatalities in *MK4*. We just said that we weren't gonna have the cutesy type. The game's gonna have fatalities.

GF: Can you give an example? Are they going to be evil?

EB: Oh yeah, yeah. Lots of blood!

GF: Is the blood going to be sprite-based?

EB: No it's very cool, it's 3D blood.

GF: Any word on what home systems MK4 will be converted too?

EB: GameBoy, Lynx, Atari VCS (laughing). It's not been talked about yet.

MK MYTHOLOGIES

GF: How long has MK Mythologies been in development?

JT: We've been working on it for about a year.

GF: How many guys do you have working on it?

JT: Let me count 'em on my fingers. There's now, like, seven of 'em.

GF: Did any of the team work on any previous MK games?

JT: Nope.

GF: How would you best describe the game?

JT: We get this question a lot. I call it an action/adventure game. It's got RPG elements in it, but it's really not an RPG. It's more of an action/adventure game. There's a lot of exploring.

GF: Could you relate it to any other game currently available?

JT: Not really, it's pretty new. I mean, the majority of elements are taken from *MK*. But it's also got elements from games like, say *Out of This World*, or the exploring elements of *Tomb Raider*.

Mythologies takes place as a prequel to the first MK, and we introduce characters and a set of villains that predate the more recent MK games.







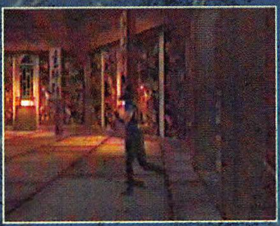
GF: What systems is it coming out for?
JT: PS and N64.
GF: Will they come out at the same time?
JT: That hasn't been determined yet, but that's the plan. They may be staggered slightly.
GF: Will the two versions differ much?
JT: Well the PS version is going to have some FMV sequences, but the Nintendo version will have backgrounds that are a little bit prettier.
GF: What size N64 cart are you shooting for?
JT: The biggest one they've got!
GF: How does the game control? I've heard you say that the controls are identical to MK but it looks like there are a lot of platform sections. Do you really have to press "up" to jump?
JT: Yes you have to press "up" to jump. Anybody who can play *MK* can play this game. The controls are identical, with the addition of moves that will allow you to traverse the environment, like climbing up cliffs, crawling, etc.
GF: Why Sub Zero?
JT: I think visually, Sub Zero is one of the most memorable characters. Also he was one of the more mysterious. I had this back story for him that we thought we be kind of cool to explore a little bit. Other than that, he's one of the most popular characters.
GF: What's the story so far?
JT: This game is a prequel to the very first *MK* game. It takes place ten years prior to the first tournament. Sub Zero is still alive, it's one of his first adventures. He gets to meet a group of characters that sort of play a larger part in *MK* later on.
GF: Anything more specific?
JT: Well, he starts out as sort of as a bad guy and you wind up stealing something you shouldn't have, and then you sort of have to steal it back.
GF: So how's the game linked to MK4?
JT: Well, primarily it's linked through the Elder Gods aspect. We're introducing a few characters that will be in *MK4*.
GF: Will there be many familiar characters in MK Mythologies?
JT: The majority of them are new with the exception of a few, and Scorpion's one of them. Also Rayden shows up in it, and Shang (Tsung) to some extent.
GF: Will any of them be playable?
JT: Just Sub Zero.
GF: The game is made up of eight "worlds." How does this work in game terms?
JT: One world is a big level and you progress from A-Z. Each world is based on tasks that you have to perform, in addition to a lot of fighting. And that's it primarily. Once you select the correct items in the correct sequence then you get to move on.
GF: So it's linear. You just go from one level to the next?
JT: Primarily, but there is some back and forth.
GF: Are there going to be any fatalities in this game?
JT: Yes, but only to a small extent.
GF: How long did it take to develop the graphics engine?
JT: It's still in development. A majority of the graphics are typical *MK* style, although I'd say the hardest part of it was integrating the three elements...there's a lot of that going on in the game.
GF: Can you take different paths to get through the levels?
JT: Yeah, there's different paths you can take to get through a level. It's not like a side scroller where you're just sort of scrolling along. You can control where you go and how you do things.
GF: What frame rate is the game currently running at?
JT: It's running at 30 fps.
GF: I know it's a different kind of game than MK, but are you going to include many secrets?
JT: Yeah, tons of secrets! Although they aren't based so much on secret moves or things of that nature. The secrets are more based on environments, stuff hidden in the levels; things that you find and characters that you face.
GF: Who's doing the music for MK Mythologies?
JT: Dan Forden (Same guy who's doing *MK4*).
GF: If MK Mythologies: Sub Zero is a hit, will you do any more Mythologies games.
JT: Sure.
GF: Who's the next character you'd do?
JT: Probably Liu Kang. He's got an interesting back story and he's always sort of been our primary focus.

GENERAL

GF: How did the two of you meet?
EB: We just happened to both be working in the Midway video department at the same time. I started with Midway almost eleven years ago, but I moved to the video department in 1989.
JT: I also started in the Midway video department in 1989. Ed and I met at that point. But *MK* didn't get started until after I finished a game called *Total Carnage*, which was 1991.
GF: What else had you done prior to MK?
EB: I had done a few pinball games, and I did a football game called *High Impact* and the sequel, *Super High Impact*. That's when John and I teamed up and we started *Mortal Kombat*. We've been doing that ever since.
JT: I did a couple of games called *Smash TV* and *Total Carnage*, both of those were with Mark Tramiel. Mark Tramiel and actually went on to do *NBA Jam*.
GF: How important has Mortal Kombat been in your lives?
JT: Fairly important. I mean obviously, professionally it's been a great success for us.
GF: What games influenced you when you were growing up?
EB: I was affected by the '80s video game boom. You know, *Defender, Missile Command, Robotron, Centipede, Millipede.*
JT: Yeah, same thing here. I mean, I was a fan of all the big arcade games that were out back then. And then the home consoles. The Atari 2600 had a big impact on me. I was a total arcade junkie.
GF: What games have you been playing recently.
EB: I've played a lot of *Cruis'n The World*, some *Hang Time*.
GF: Mortal Kombat is a very popular game, but it takes a bit of a bashing in the specialist press. How do you feel about this?
EB: Well, you know, there's a lot of press that love the game, but there's one particular magazine—and I think everyone can pretty much guess which one it is—that just has it out for us. They don't like the fact that we're on top of the heap at the moment. Just because they prefer *VF* or something doesn't hide the fact that every *MK* game has beaten every *VF* game to date. And they won't even acknowledge that. And, you know, when they won't even acknowledge the game's success then we can't take them seriously with regards to the comments they make about the game.
GF: Why do you think the MK series has been so popular?
EB: Again, I think we always give our same answer to that question, and that is: It's a combination of everything that's in it. People relate to the characters more than they do with other games, which are kind of generic. And uh, you know, the big snowball effect.
GF: I've gotta ask. Which one of you is better at MK?
JT: Ed can play a lot better than I can now. I think we used to be on the same level, but not any more.
GF: Will MK4 be the first MK game to make it in Japan?
EB: I don't know. They've all been top sellers in the US but for some reason we haven't had much of an effect in Japan. I think there are other factors involved than just the game.
GF: I know you guys are both focused on your own separate projects, but do you ever help each other out?
EB: No, we're not working directly together. I'm not writing any software for *Mythologies* and John's not doing computer graphics for *MK4*. But we based the new characters in *MK4* off the models of John's sketches for *Mythologies*, and we still pick each other's brains like we did with the other *MKs*.
GF: So what's next for you guys after you finish your games?
EB: You know what, there's so many *MK* things going on right now that we're kind of doing two games at once. And then there's the second movie coming out, and all the animation stuff.
GF: Do you have any non-MK original titles planned?
JT: At some point I'm sure we will. It's a hard call because it's become a franchise to the point where we try to keep it alive.
GF: Thanks a lot guys.

Anybody who can play MK can play this game. The controls are identical, with the addition of moves that will allow you to traverse the environment, like climbing up cliffs, crawling, etc.




PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CORE
PUBLISHER - EIDOS
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - JUNE



E. STORM
Lucky for us, Zack's not a bed wetter.



MIRRORS KNIT YOUR WORLD WITH TWISTED LANDSCAPES

SwagMan



For this final *Swagman* update I was handed a 95% finished version of the game. The save points weren't activated, the FMV scenes had yet to be placed and much of the audio was still in someone's hard drive but I finally got to feel what *Swagman* would play like after a suitable two-year development time. Swagman plays much like—you guessed it, those *Zelda* games of old. You pick stuff up, push stuff, pull stuff, and hack away at slimy bad guys as you trek between two parallel worlds in an effort to WAKE UP and get the hell out of this dark, dank world. Generous lighting, countless rendered creeps and huge bosses compliment this twisting maze of puzzles and outer wordly terrain. The music mimics the game's dark overtones. We will (definitely) have a *Swagman* review for you next month. Currently the PS game is ahead of the SS version which (regardless of what you've heard) has not been cancelled.



WELCOME TO THE NIGHT ZACK. IT'S A CREEPY, ILL-NATURED PLACE—ESPECIALLY NOW THE SWAGMAN LURKS IN THE SHADOWS...

WILL ZACK AND HIS SISTER EVER ESCAPE THE SWAGMAN'S HELLISH DOMAIN?



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TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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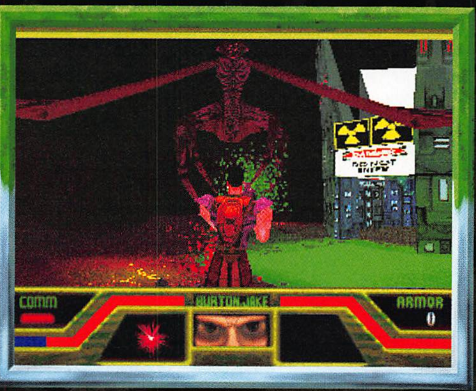


Every now and then a game just comes from out of nowhere and takes you completely by surprise. Admittedly, it doesn't happen that often these days (big games are normally always hyped in advance) but it does happen. The most recent example I can think of is **PowerSlave.** I mean, really, who saw that one coming? Well, now it's happened again, as with minimum fuss and bother, Konami's Broken Helix has slipped out and quietly created a new genre.



BROKEN HELIX

If you're a regular reader of GameFan, you'll already know all about the premise behind **Broken Helix.** It's a 3D corridor/adventure game that puts you in the combat boots of Jake Burton, bomb disposal expert and purveyor of all things cool. Jake's been called into Area 51 to disarm a bomb planted by a group of rogue scientists who, prior to their terrorist activities, were working on a top-secret military project codenamed "Broken Helix." Jake is accompanied by a crack Marine team lead by the fearsome Black Dawn (who looks and sounds for all the world like a digitized Arnold Schwarzenegger), and once the bombs have been defused, their true intentions are revealed. Your only hope is to uncover the mystery behind Broken Helix and escape Area 51 before it's too late...



Let's get one thing clear right from the start: **Broken Helix** is NOT just an another corridor game. Sure it has corridor elements, but it's as much **Tomb Raider** and **Resident Evil** as **Doom.** Sound ambitious? You don't know the half of it. Ok, let's break it down.



DOOM The **Doom** influence is most apparent in the way the game actually plays. Jake's controls are typical of a first-person shooter, with responsive 3D movement, strafing and vertical aiming. Like **Doom,** the earlier stages of the game are set in claustrophobic corridors and tunnels, and there's a fair amount of **Doom**-style shooting action required. You can even move the camera 'into' Jake for a true first-person perspective, though the polygon gun looks a bit funky.

TOMB RAIDER Although you may not be able to tell from the shots, the graphics engine is similar to **Tomb Raider.** In **Broken Helix,** both the environments and characters are rendered using texture mapped polygons, and everything runs at a constant 30 fps. You can select a **Tomb Raider**-style 3rd-person camera (handy for the platform sections), and the game contains a similar mixture of puzzles and action. Plus, the further you get into Area 51, the more the environments open up. By the time you reach the alien ship, you'll be exploring **Tomb Raider**-sized caverns!

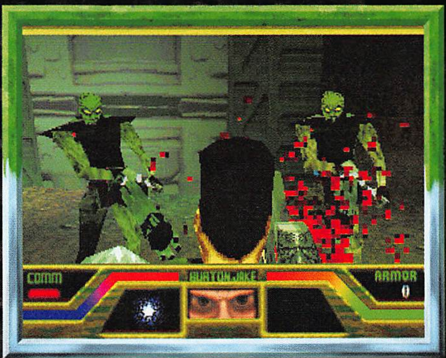
R REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - KONAMI	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - MAY '97



KNIGHTMARE
Dig it, Man, dig it.



RESIDENT EVIL Like **Resident Evil**, **Broken Helix** is completely story-driven. Depending on your actions, there are four different paths the story can take, and they're all cool. The action is interspersed with CG cut-scenes that move the story along (I like the way the CG models have the same 'polygon' look as the real-time graphics) and you can talk to other characters to garner information. Also, **Broken Helix** shares similarities with **Resident Evil**'s story. I don't want to give too much away, but expect the words 'genetic' and 'research' to turn up quite frequently.







ENTER THE FOURTH DIMENSION

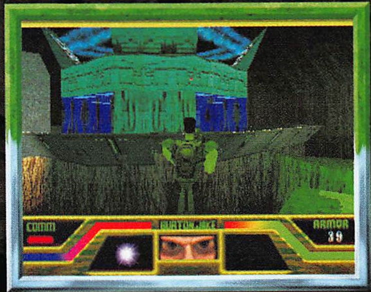


Everything in Broken Helix happens in real-time 4D, meaning that while you're walking around doing your stuff on one level, other characters are walking 'round doing their stuff on another. As Black Dawn and his marine squad come after you, they systematically sweep through each level, killing everyone in their path and destroying evidence. If you're careful, you can watch (and listen to) them as they do it. Just make sure you don't get spotted...





By blending this combination of elements together, Konami has taken the familiar and created something entirely new. The graphics are solid, the audio is excellent, the story is gripping and the gameplay is top notch. Now, I'm not saying that everything's perfect (the jumping kind of sucks), but the fact is: **Broken Helix** treads new ground, and



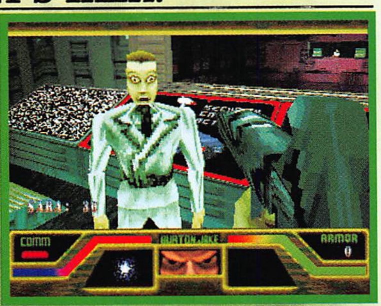
Bruce Campbell's in it! Bruce! The main man!

treads it well. The designers have a great sense of humor (gotta love that elevator music) and they've obviously watched enough decent sci-fi movies to get things right. Besides, Bruce Campbell's in it! Bruce! The main man! Of course, even without his input **Broken Helix** would still be brilliant. But with him, the cake is well and truly iced. Groovy. ***K***





LET'S TALK!



In Broken Helix, you can talk to any character by simply walking up to them and pressing circle. Sometimes they will give you vital information or a crucial item, and other times the conversation will be just for laughs. Bruce Campbell lends his voice to the key role of Jake Burton (for all intents and purposes a futuristic Ash) and some of the resulting dialogue is absolutely hilarious. Whoever wrote the script deserves an award. 'Your mama drives a school bus' indeed!







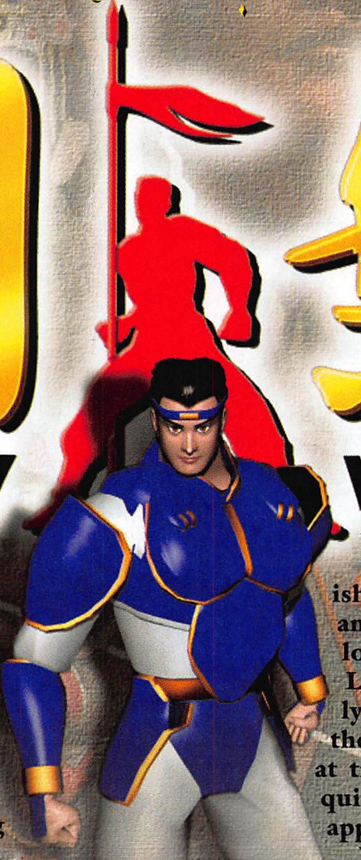






WHAT'S THIS? A FIGHTING GAME FROM KOEI? WELL, WHADDYA KNOW—IT'S GREAT!

三國無双



DYNASTY WARRIORS™

Ah, just picture it. It's third century China; the ubiquitous Han Dynasty has splintered and the period of the fabled Three Kingdoms has begun. The three ruling warlords—Sun Quan of Wu, Liu Bei of Shu, and Cao Cao of Wei—recruit the very best fighters to protect and expand their respective territories in a narcissistic struggle for power. Hey, that sounds suspiciously like the set up for a fighting game, doesn't it? Indeed it does, and it is.

Surely by now everyone is over the "shock" that Koei has made a fighting game. What everyone may not have gotten over yet is the undeniable quality of *Dynasty Warriors*. From the crisp look to the somewhat-innovative, weapon-based gameplay, this is a surprisingly solid title through and through.

Immediately apparent are the clean and polished visuals. The characters are big, smooth, and wonderfully textured. Imagine the 60fps look of *Tekken 2* as opposed to *Soul Blade*. Light sourcing is used sparingly but effectively and weapons leave big, swooshing tracers as they fly through the air. Things do get flashy at times, though for the most part the look is quite restrained and classy, with a rich and appropriate color palette.

With ten immediately selectable characters and three bosses (plus maybe a hidden character or two), *DW* is not lacking fighters. They're all surprisingly cool except for maybe Xu Zhu who swings the Mortal Thorns. His body looks utterly ridiculous, though he does have some decent moves. My personal favorite is Xiahoun





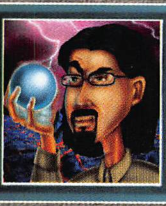




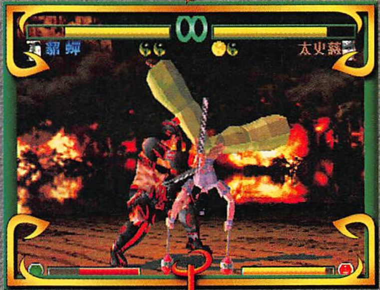
P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - OMEGA FORCE	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - KOEI	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



SUBSTANCE D
Aw, shut yer cake hole—it's good!

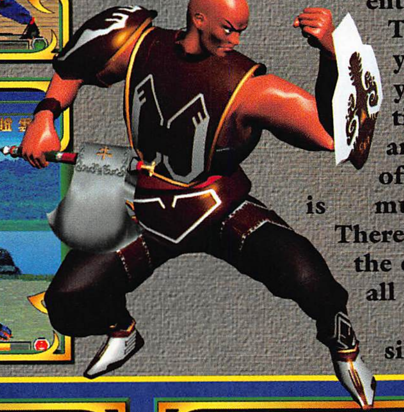





Dun. With his broadsword, he's one chode-smashing fellow. And who can resist a character who's ending shows him pulling out his own eye and then eating it? That's the tops.

But what's more excellent than any of that is the parry system, of which there are two different types. One simply deflects the oncoming attack, while the other pulls the opponent by you, leaving his or her back wide open for some slicing action (see side bar). This is a really satisfying and well implemented feature, giving the player more to do than simply block. To master parrying is to truly coax the most out of *Dynasty Warrior*'s gameplay. And by pressing both parry buttons at once, you can sidestep allowing for some limited 3D movement.

In what is fast becoming a mainstay of all fighting games, *DW* features a "super" meter at the bottom of the screen. While it's yellow you can bust out a super, which is generally a very powerful and automatic combo. Alternately, if your life bar is in the red, you can pull out supers till the cows come home. This lends an artificial frenetic quality to the closing moments of a match, but it is at least intense.



Control is completely transparent, just as it should be. The characters do what you ask of them when you ask. Response is tight and natural (not an easy thing to pull off in a 3D game) and is much appreciated. There's nothing tricky in the controller motions either, as it's all quarter circle, dragon punch, or tap moves.

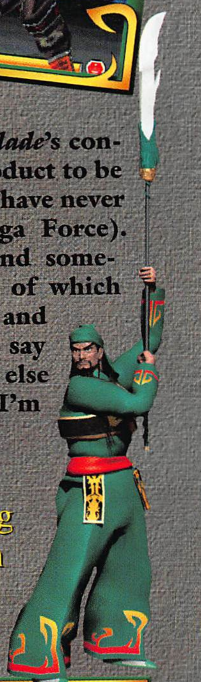
I hope this game doesn't get lost amidst *Soul Blade*'s considerable mindshare. This is a really polished product to be coming from a developer that I have never even heard of till now (Omega Force). And aside from the generic and sometimes out of place tunes (one of which reeks of *Amazing Discoveries*) and the inability to run, I'd have to say they did just about everything else right with this game. I'm impressed, Koei. ***SD***

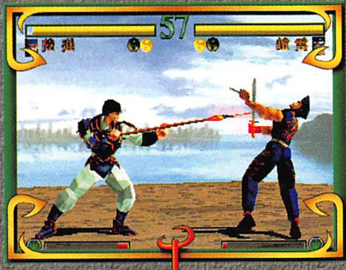
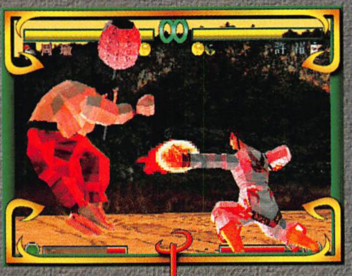
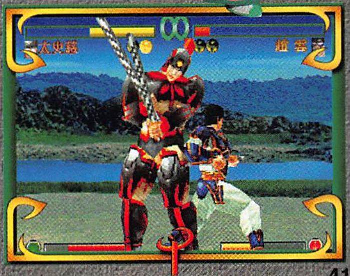



THE PARRIES:
By pressing ✖ just as you see the opponent's attack beginning, you can deflect the blow leaving them open.

Or, by pressing ●, you can pull the enemy past you, exposing their briefly prone form to some despicable back stabbing. Good fun, eh?

par´ry, *n.*; 1. an evasion; evasive reply. 2. a warding off or a turning aside of an attack, blow, etc., as in Dynasty Warriors.



REVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - TAMSOFT
PUBLISHER - PLAYMATES
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - MAY



E. STORM Rebuilt from the ground up and loaded with options!

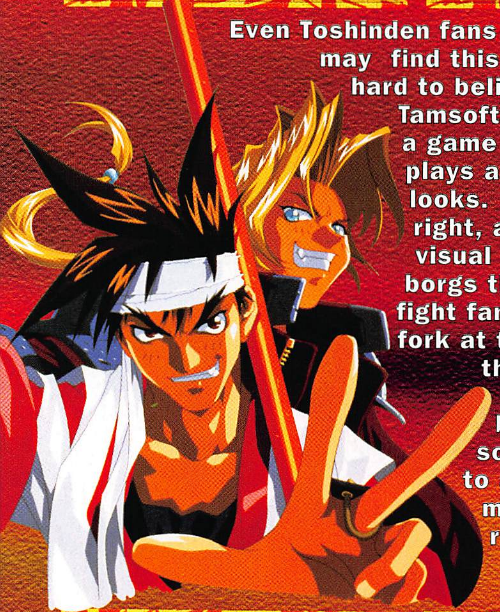








Battle Arena Toshinden 3



Even Toshinden fans may find this hard to believe.... Tamsoft has crafted a game that actually plays as good as it looks. That's right, after two visual smorgasborgs that no serious fight fan would stab a fork at they finally found the game play button. T3's got wild combos, juggles, and even some measure of balance to accompany those trademark visuals that have carried the series thus far. I've been a Toshinden fan since the get-go due mainly to the art, visuals, and character design. I find such attractions hard to resist and if warranted have always been able to adjust to a particular game's nuances. My lingering admiration for the original Toshinden (it was quite revolutionary at the









60FPS MODE

Say goodbye to the background detail and hello to spectacular animation!















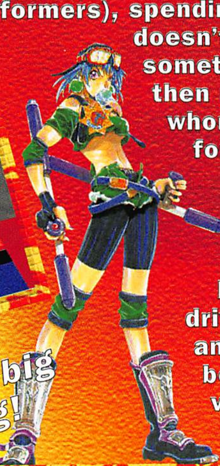
Eiji goes in for a trim... I don't think this is what he had in mind.







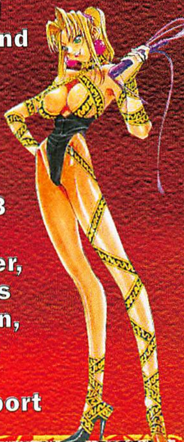
Cuiling's body peircing... get a big ring!



time) and the fact that I really liked 2 (the anime's not bad either) have all contributed to my fondness for the series... and I'm making excuses. OK, I don't live for fighters (I live for platformers), spending month's mastering techniques just doesn't fit my schedule. I play them until something with jumping comes around and then move on. Those who do (many of whom are in this building), I admire for their diligence, but they need not check in to the Toshinden experience. ('cept for maybe a quicky intermission between SF3 sessions.)

If it's a solid 3D fighter you're after, driven by intruiging character designs and quality visuals, than do check in, because Toshinden 3 is all new and vastly improved.

Playmates has added to the import











SUPERS

Blast your opponent into orbit with an array of fierce explosive attacks!

















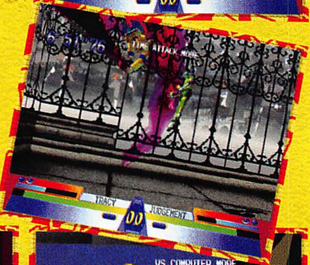


original by including a Tekken-like practice mode to complement an already vast array of available gameplay options including VS CPU, Time Attack, and Survival modes.

The real bait however lies in the available 60fps mode where the backgrounds are sacrificed, making way for silky smooth animation. It's not the caliber of Tobal, but it's good... really good, especially considering it's chicken (the GameFanism "chicken" is the word for any bonus, power-up, etc., derived from the many games which reveal fully cooked birds as a means of energy). In the event you haven't noticed yet, ring-outs are a thing of the past as well. T3 employs 4 walls and a ceiling for which to bounce and juggle opponents off of. In addition to these generous tweaks are the droves of new available characters. From alter-egos for each to 4 hidden,

















A Toshinden staple, panning cameras add a measure of drama to the battles, such as the painful encounter above, as Gaia introduces Tracy to the wall. Police brutality... polygonally speaking.

Toshinden 3's *forgiving combo system allows you to link just about anything.*

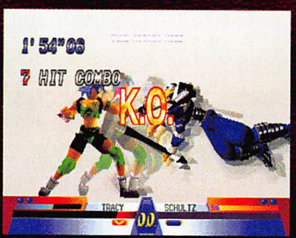
COMBOS!







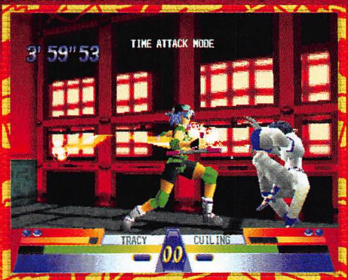












Generous special effects and lighting are apparent throughout the Toshinden Tournament.







Toshinden 3 offers up a whopping 32 combatants! A slick CG intro., multiple cameras (you can fiddle with mid-round), and of course, a spectacular soundtrack are all standard equipment, as usual.

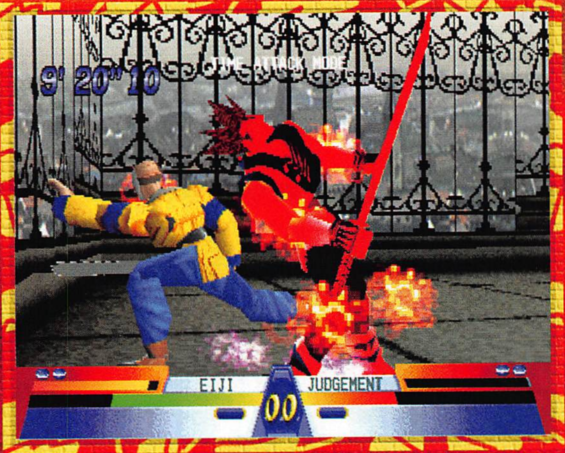


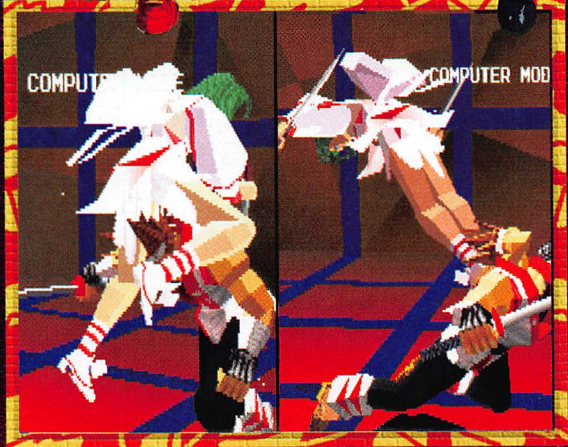
The sum of these parts adds up to a splendid sequel as well as a great prequel for Toshindens to come. ***ES***





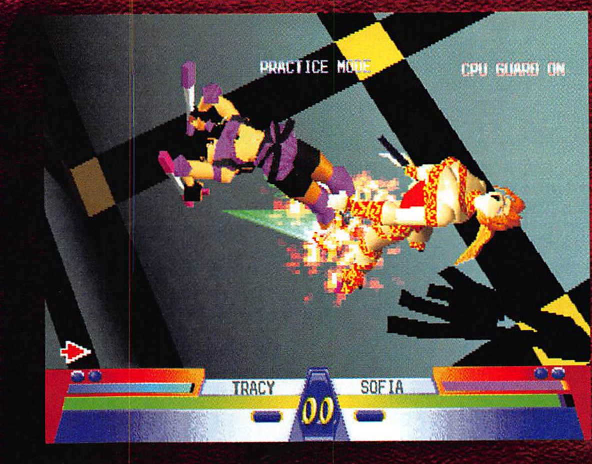


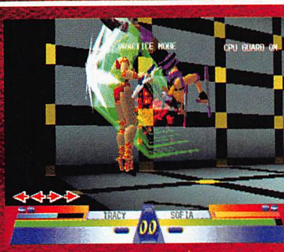




PRACTICE

Master your techniques, memorize manuvers and plan your strategy.







MOAI STAGE

Plenty of rocks on this stage and some of them walk! Hurl the statues and watch them spew bombs!





ROBOT STAGE

A robot attempts to thwart your victory. Avoid the lasers and it's hefty left hook!

SAND STAGE

Vicious tornadoes rip through the desert and the contestants! Strong winds are a problem here.



POITER'S POINT

"Disposing of things and tossing them out unsparingly without a second thought". That sums up Konami's newest PlayStation title, Poiter's Point, perfectly. Apparently the people of the future like nothing more than to watch specially selected contestants dispose of each other by tossing heavy objects at their heads! Four odd individuals must square off and then polish off their opponent in the allotted time. Grab objects that are placed around the stage including boulders, boxes and missiles and then use them to beat your foes into the ground.

Over fifteen varied contestants, six exciting stages, bulging sackfuls of special attacks, two game modes and most importantly, four player simultaneous action makes Poiter's Point (or Poy Poy as it might be known here) one of the best multi player games we've seen for quite some time.

A US release date is uncertain at this time though an update on this and more game details shall appear next issue. **K**

P PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KCET	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
PUBLISHER - KCET	DIFFICULTY - EASY
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - N/A



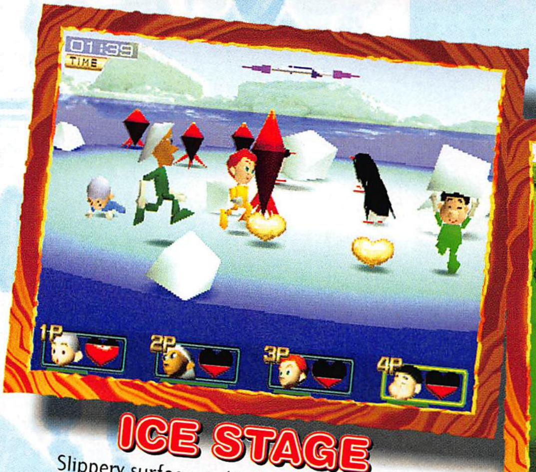
KNIGHTMARE
It's log, it's log! It's big, it's heavy, it's wood!











ICE STAGE

Slippery surface and killer penguins are the hazards to watch for on these frozen ice tundras.

PLAIN STAGE

The logs make excellent weapons. Roll them at your opponents and strike them out!





NIGHT STAGE

Faulty lighting plunges this stage into darkness making it difficult to see oncoming dinosaurs!!

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Sunnyvale, CA 94086

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CAPCOM

Avatar Creations

MARVEL COMICS

MARVEL™ SUPER HEROES





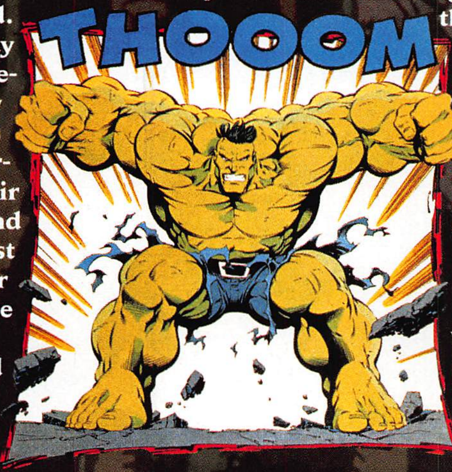
Earlier this month GameFan received a 'late alpha' of the much-anticipated *Marvel Super Heroes*, Capcom's 1996 follow up to their first licensed 2D fighter, *X-Men: Children Of The Atom*. Obviously it's too early to make any kind of final judgment, but from what we've seen there's good news and bad news.

The good news is that, so far, the game plays identically to the *MSH* coin-op. Our resident *MSH* experts spent several hours testing arcade combos on the seven characters present in this demo, and came away thoroughly impressed. There are a few gameplay features yet to be implemented (like the Infinity Gems) but otherwise it's spot on. All of the characters play like their arcade counterparts, and the air juggles are just as ridiculous as ever (Wolverine has an infinite hit combo!!).







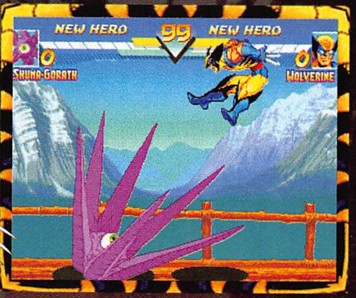


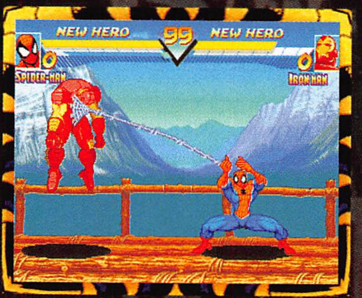
Unfortunately, the bad news is that, at present, the game is missing around 50% of the coin-op's animation frames. Ok, this version is early (there was only one background), and the frame situation may improve, but with so many details yet to be added (like the gems and the backgrounds), I doubt it. Capcom canceled their conversion of *X-Men: COTA* to PS because of the frame problem, and *MSH* is even more frame intensive. Now I'm not one to bicker about a couple of lost frames, but one of the biggest attractions of *MSH* in the arcades was its amazing graphics, and they lose a lot of impact on PS.

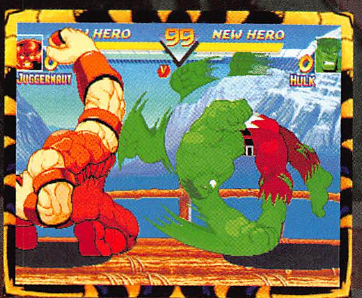
Still, even with only half the frames, the game looks pretty good, and you can bet that the gameplay will be 100%.

The final cast list features characters from *X-Men: COTA* (Psylocke, Wolverine, Magneto, Juggernaut, Akuma) and new characters including some Marvel good guys (The Incredible Hulk, Spiderman, Iron Man) and some bad guys (Shuma Gorath, Black Heart, Thanos, Dr. Doom). We'll be back with a full update when we have more. *K*









P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



KNIGHTMARE
So what happened to PS *X-Men:COTA*?





HEROES FROM ANOTHER TIME

Herc's Adventure offers players a choice of three playable characters: Herc, Jason or Atlanta. Herc is the strongest of the pack (he can pick up heavy objects) and attacks with his mighty club; Atlanta has a bow which she can use to safely nail enemies from a distance and Jason dices enemies into itty-bitty cubes with his sword.







H*erc's Adventure* seems to be a pseudo-sequel to LucasArts' 16-bit classic, *Zombies Ate My Neighbors*. The theme may be new, but the control, gameplay and design all seem remarkably 'similar'. Check out the shots of the Egyptian area. Does that UFO ring any bells? Of course, this is by no means a bad thing. *ZAMN* (and to a lesser extent *Ghoul Patrol*) were both really cool games, and *Herc's Adventure* promises to be even better.

Like *ZAMN*, *Herc's* takes the form of a top-down scrolling action/adventure, with you (and a friend in two player mode), hitting the pastoral environs of ancient Greece in an attempt to thwart a demonic plot by Hades himself. On your travels you'll encounter witches, Cyclops, skeletons, centurions and gangster trees (among other things!), all out to stop you from progressing through the game's vast world map. In keeping with the Greek theme, bosses take the from of recognizable figures from Greek mythology (i.e.. Medusa, Hydra, etc.) and on occasion even Zeus or Hades pop up to deliver a message.

One advancement *Herc's* makes over *ZAMN* is that the levels are all seamlessly linked together, giving the impression of one huge world map. The levels vary from snow capped mountains, to scorched deserts to dense forests, each with their own set of themed enemies.

As with *ZAMN* you can collect and store a number of items crucial to your success, including weapons, magical attacks, health power-ups and inflatable sheep! Certain items work better on certain enemies than others, and you'll have to experiment to find the best combination. Hint: Cyclops can't resist sheep!

Like most of LucasArts' titles, *Herc's Adventure* has a wacky sense of humor that permeates every facet of the game. From the comic-book style graphics to the *Tick*-like voice of the intellectually challenged Hercules, this game is guaranteed to put a smile on your face. Look for an 'epic' review next month. K



P PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - LUCASARTS

PUBLISHER - LUCASARTS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - JUNE '97

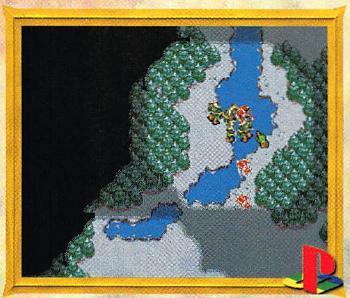


KNIGHTMARE
Where's Xena when you need her?

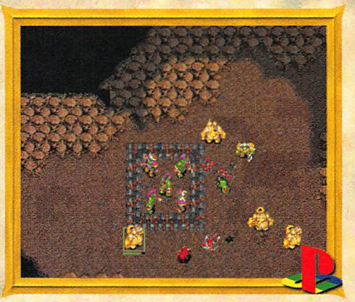














Hot on the heels of *Command & Conquer* comes *Warcraft 2*, the next great PC strategy title to make its way to home consoles. Originally programmed by Blizzard, the conversion to Saturn and PS is being handled by Electronic Arts. Although still early at this point, there's hope that *Warcraft 2* will make it intact to the 32-bit systems.

So what makes *Warcraft 2* so special, and why was it such a hit on the PC? Simple: excellent game design. Just like *C&C*, *Warcraft 2* carefully balances real time battles with strategic resource management. Each campaign brings about new objectives and environments where you must organize both troops and common peasants. Here's an example of a typical level: You start out in a huge clearing, surrounded by deep forests on all sides. In this scenario, you have four troops and three peasants, as well as a 'Great Hall' (the main base from which all development begins). A quick search of your surroundings reveals a gold mine, and so you send a couple of townsfolk away to begin mining. Back at the Hall, you call upon the services of more peasants, which costs gold, so it's fortunate that your people have returned from the mines with good news. Now you set them to the task of chopping trees for timber, in order to build farms, to feed the troops and commoners, and ultimately expand your territory. As you grow, enemies will inevitably attack, and you must have troops to defend all corners of your land. To produce and maintain troops, you must build barracks, which takes wood, which requires peasants, and to have those peasants you need gold. Now imagine an intense campaign, filled with hours and hours of this type of gameplay—using an intuitive menu/cursor system and perfect, albeit simplistic, graphics and icons.

WARCRAFT II

That's what *Warcraft 2* is all about. As far as the conversions go, right now the PS and Saturn are almost exactly the same (the Saturn *Warcraft 2* looks a little cleaner), and they both offer system-to-system link-up modes. And as most PC gamers will confirm, you haven't really played *Warcraft 2* till you've tried it against a human opponent. Both campaigns (the PC original *Tides of Darkness*, and the expansion campaign *Beyond the Dark Portal*) are on the PS and Saturn discs, so be prepared to lead a band of humans OR a band of orcs into battle and prosperity. It's just good to see *Warcraft 2* converting to the 32-bit machines, giving newcomers like myself a chance to play a great game without a PC. More *Warcraft 2* coverage coming soon. *G*



Fighting alongside a huge waterway, our warriors find themselves trapped in fierce melee combat. Beaten and battleworn, they make a desperate stand on the shore as two mad trolls close in. The bloody remains of their fallen kinsman are spattered nearby, foretelling, perhaps, the fate of them all. Unless...



The only way to move on was through this narrow mountain pass. The forest beyond looked lush and exciting, and the troops were anxious to walk new lands. Unfortunately, the pass also proved to be an ideal spot for an ambush, as beasts suddenly flanked from all sides. One man fell instantly, valiantly dragging his assailant down with him. The others quickly fall back, weapons drawn, ready to face the hordes...









REVIEW

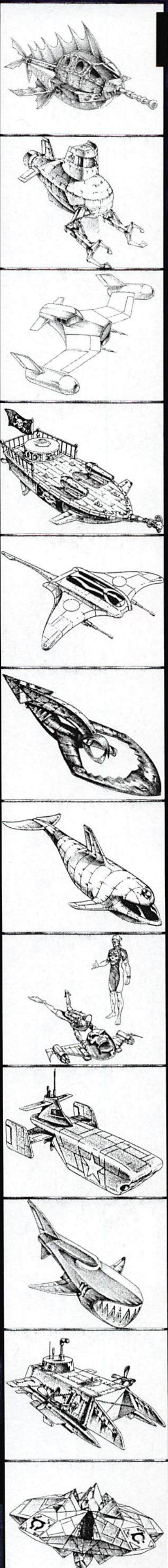
PlayStation / SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - BLIZZARD
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS
FORMAT - CD

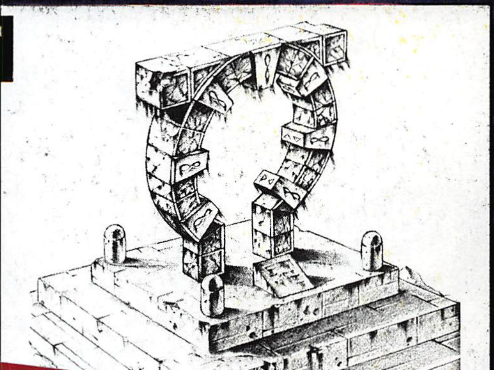
OF PLAYERS - 1 (2 W/LINK)
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - JUNE '97

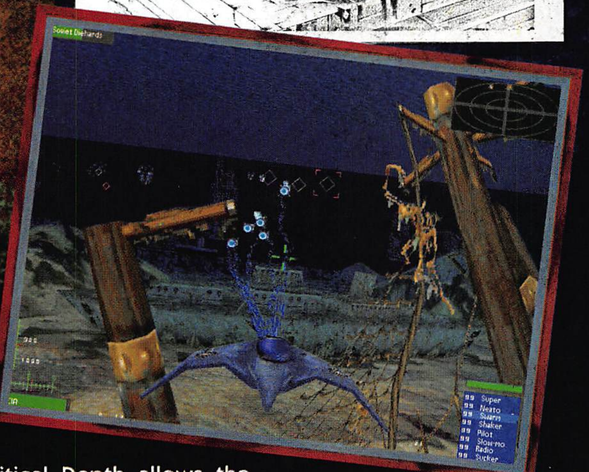


GLITCH
Swords, magic, and pigs...now that's WAR!



CRITICAL DEPTH



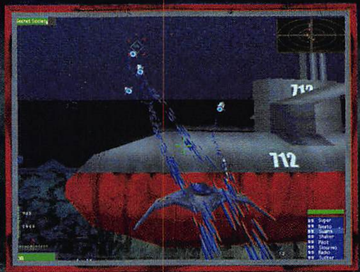


Like the film industry, games seem to follow trends. Witness the latest spate of games that take place fully or at least partially underwater. Scavenger's Amok, GT's TigerShark, and Black Ops' upcoming Treasures of The Deep all share aquatic backdrops. Now, the premier PS developers at SingleTrac are testing the proverbial waters (I couldn't resist) with their own undersea action game, Critical Depth.

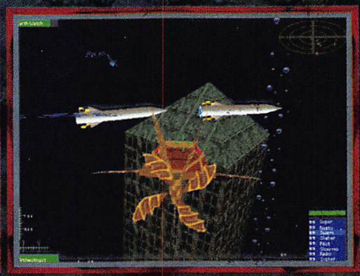
CD's set up is sultry. After an unusual electromagnetic signal was detected deep in the Caribbean Sea, a scientific expedition team, Medusa 7, was sent to investigate. They found a strange metallic structure surrounded by multiple luminous pods. Following an attempt to retrieve the pods, communication with the team was lost. All attempts at locating Medusa 7 have proven unsuccessful. In the interim, several more sources of the EM transmission have popped up all over the globe. In a mad rush of opportunism and idealism, treasure hunters, governments, terrorists, and even secret societies converge on the strange submerged objects (dubbed 'the Thresholds') to unravel their true nature. Will the secret of the Thresholds be used to enslave mankind or to set it free?







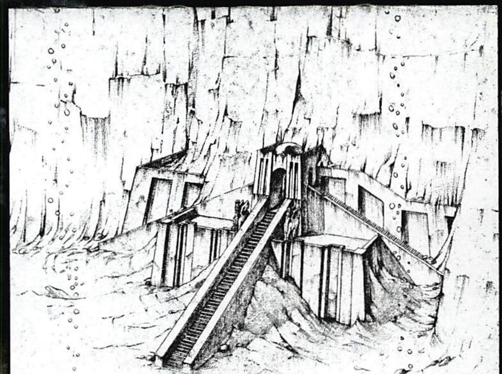




Critical Depth allows the player to choose from 12 completely different subs, each with its own back story and agenda. For instance, the CIA's sub seeks the pods in an attempt to hide any knowledge of extraterrestrial life on Earth, while the terrorists search in order to fashion a nuclear weapon. There are even those who search with more metaphysical intentions such as reaching a higher state of consciousness through the Threshold.

So with the sub of your choice, you set out to find and activate the Thresholds. Of course, enemy craft are there to stop you at every turn. And, in addition to the risk of being blasted out of the water, you've got to keep your sub above critical depth (hey!) unless you're in the mood to implode. You don't want to end up like Michael Biehn in The Abyss do you? But it just so happens that the evil people at SingleTrac have placed some items just below critical depth, meaning that you must risk health and power to go after them. Tricky, tricky.

CD is super early (it wasn't even playable), but I must say I love the premise. If SingleTrac can make this game half as fun to play as WarHawk and implement some fluid, underwater physics, Critical Depth could easily rise to the top of this newfound aquatic wave. We know they can make a pretty mean engine, so my hopes are fairly high. Upon receipt of a playable version, we'll be back to tell you if Critical Depth sinks or swims. SD

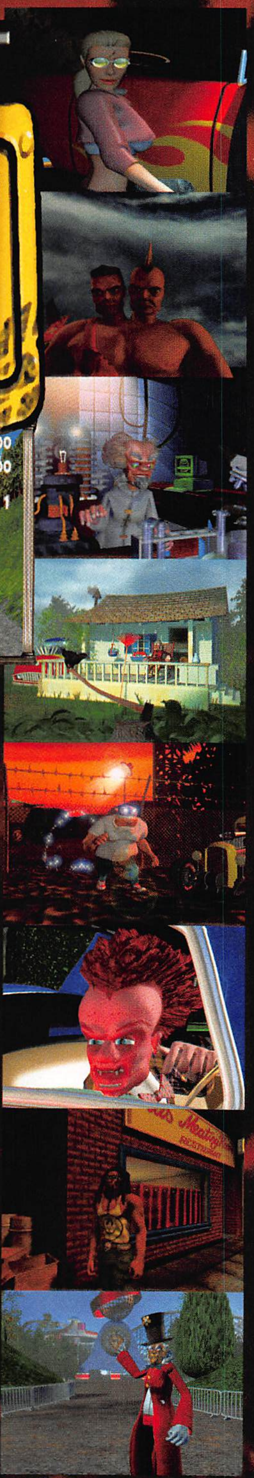


WRECKIN' CREW
DRIVE DANGEROUSLY







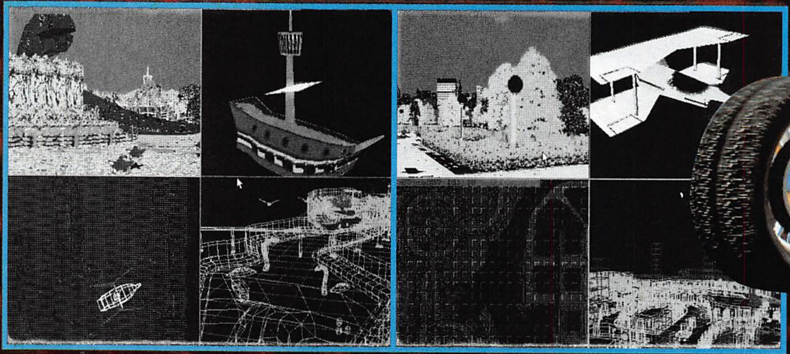


Following in the footsteps of *Excalibur* comes Telstar's next PS title: *Wreckin' Crew*. Although I hate to use the term, *WC* is definately of the "wacky racer" variety, with cartoony vehicles and bizarre characters. There's also big guns, so *WC* might end up being a hard-core, umm, wacky racer.

First, a short disclaimer: I haven't actually played most of the levels you are seeing on this page, so I really can't describe, in depth, the level layouts. The single playable level on our preview disc was early, but it did offer a glimpse into *WC*'s play-mechanics and characters.

Wreckin' Crew isn't pretending to be anything more than it is. Gas, shoot, brake, and a weapon/item select are the main controls. Simple enough. In fact, Telstar's main goal is to make it fast and fun, rather than concentrating on the details of the polygon engine, as many companies do lately. The playable track, a city course, had several short cuts and items strewn about, as well as secret areas. Expect loads of tracks and playing conditions, from racing to stunt driving, demolition derby arenas, cup competitions, and even deathmatch multi-player modes, link-up or split-screen! BIG plans… I hope everything works out (it sure sounds like fun!).

I'll wait for an updated version of *Wreckin Crew* before disclosing additional information (once I've played more of the game). *Excalibur 2555* is really impressive, so I'm counting on Telstar to make *Wreckin' Crew* everything they promise it to be. **G**





STEEL REIGN





Now here's a genre that has yet to be saturated on the PS—the arcade style tank simulation. Similar in feel to Sega's *Desert Tank*, Sony's *Steel Reign* looks more than up to the challenge of filling this otherwise uncommon gap in the PS' library quite nicely.

Offering up a choice of three distinctive tanks, the game sets you about your task of destroying strategic targets (and anything else that happens to cross your sights) in each level. It's your standard fare—fuel and munitions depots, radar and communications installations, missile launchers—you know the drill. And what fun would this be without something trying to blow you up? Enemy tanks, planes, jeeps, and even lone soldiers all vie for the opportunity to end your life functions. Of course, you're in a tank, so some big guns are at your disposal as well. Thus far, this is easily the most satisfying element of *SR*. To the accompaniment of some incredibly meaty sound effects, the feeling of blasting enemy tanks and planes reaches an entropic high. Hey, it's fun to destroy.

Using what, to me, looks a little like the *Rally Cross* engine, *SR*'s visuals are also more than up to the challenge. It's a fairly robust engine with a frame rate always hovering at or around 30ps. One bumpy-ass ride through the canyon level should convince just about anyone as to the stability of this engine. And though the draw-in is noticeable and could be (and may be) improved, it's not too unreasonable even in this early stage.

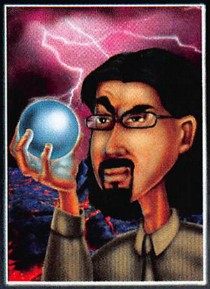
At its current level of development, the gameplay is fairly straightforward. The levels are rectangular in construction, with you starting at one end and the target(s) generally located at the other end. Buildings, hills, and of course, enemies are all in between, doing their best to make your journey all the more interesting and memorable. Do a little exploring too, and you'll come across much needed shields and weapons. There's even a basic two player split screen battle mode for those times when some sentient opposition is desired.

With some final tweaking of gameplay and buttoning up of graphics, *Steel Reign* should easily rise to the top of the "arcade style tank simulation" category on PS. It's a sparsely populated category, to be sure, but *SR* has the potential to be a damn fine game in its own right. Stay tuned for more... ***SD***

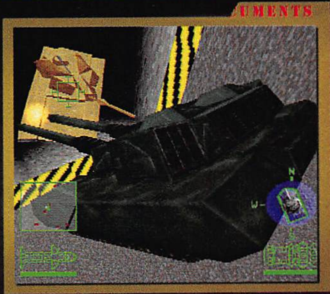
P PREVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - CHANTEMAR
- PUBLISHER - SONY
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - AUGUST '97

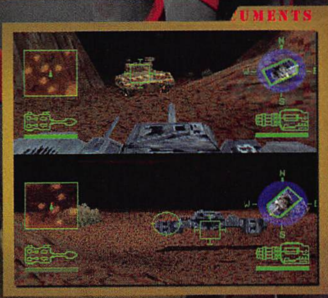


SUBSTANCE D
Can you see me in a tank commander's uniform?



















Jersey Devil

Ah, good ol' ReadySoft, the company that brought Dragon's Lair, Space Ace, and the original Brain Dead 13 to home consoles are attempting to distance themselves from their purely animated past with Jersey Devil, a go-anywhere, 3-D action/adventure game. How's that for a leap of genres?

But old habits die hard, I suppose, and belying their past, ReadySoft has blessed Jersey Devil with an impressive and amusing animated intro. As it opens, we find a pumpkin-headed, um, man, carrying a small cage back to the laboratory of the evil Dr. Knarf. You see, Dr. Knarf is into mutating vegetables in a big way (hence the pumpkin-headed minion). Inside this little cage is baby Jersey Devil. Dr. K has plans to cut him up into little tiny pieces, but it seems his one remaining scalpel is horribly bent and useless. So leaving baby Jersey Devil under the supervision of his vegetable posse, he sets out to get some more blades. While the doctor's away, the baby devil will play, and Jersey Devil blows his lab sky high and is thrown clear in the blast.

Many years later, we find Dr. K's veggie henchmen abducting innocent victims all over the city. And now, a grown up JD sets out to end Dr. Knarf's evil reign.

Well, after that long-winded tirade, I'm sure you're curious as to how JD plays. Even at this game's early stage of development, it plays quite well. Jersey Devil responds almost instantly to your commands as he jumps and punches his way through the levels, pseudo Mario-style. Also, the polygonal environment moves under his little feet with a high degree of smoothness. The camera system is a little whacked at this point as it freaks out on occasion, but I'm sure this will be corrected, won't it, ReadySoft?

Remember that Jersey Devil still has quite a ways to go before completion. Tackling a completely new genre (one that is tricky to program for, at that) ReadySoft surprisingly seems to be heading in the right direction, thus far. Only time will tell if they can follow through with what they already have. ***SD***














PREVIEW | PlayStation

DEVELOPER - READYSOFT

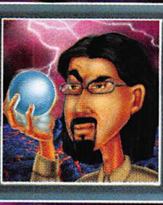
PUBLISHER - READYSOFT

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97



SUBSTANCE D
He's a cute little devil!

· Croc ·

FOX INTERACTIVE · ACTION · 3RD Q.

Here comes another "mascot" 3-D action game, this one from Fox Interactive. Play as the wacky-fun crocodile Croc in this 3D adventure game as you battle to rescue the peaceful Gobbo Islanders from the clutches of the evil magician, Baron. A "classic" story to be sure, but *Croc*'s excellent graphics and animation should compensate for any decided lack of originality in plot. With 50 levels to explore and a wealth of moves for Croc to master, *Croc* looks to have the depth to back its incredible, near-*Mario 64*-quality visuals.





· Time Crisis ·

NAMCO · GUN SHOOTING · SEPT.

Namco's highly popular arcade gun shooter, *Time Crisis*, is proceeding along nicely. Featuring levels exclusive to the PS version, *Time Crisis*, like other Namco PS ports, goes the arcade original one better. And with the hyper-accurate Namco-developed light gun which is said to be accurate to one pixel, *TC* should play perfectly. Finally PS owners will have something at least as good as, if not better than, the *Virtua Cop* series.



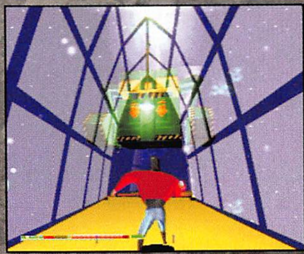


· Blasto ·

SONY · ACTION · SEPTEMBER

Here's what we know about *Blasto*... nothing! Why? 'Cause Sony won't let the fat out of the bag until E3. Supposedly, this top secret (well, it *was*) game is the stuff legends are made of. Hmmmm, we'll see.

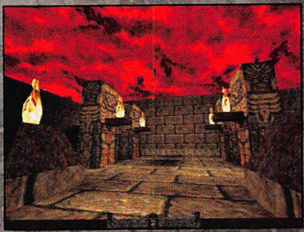
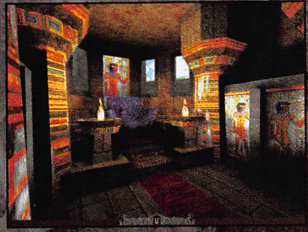



· Hexen 2 ·

ACTIVISION · CORRIDOR · FALL

Hexen 2, the sequel to the smash PC and console title *Hexen: Beyond Heretic*, is set to appear on the PS. Featuring 30 levels of corridor/role playing madness, *Hexen 2* allows the player to choose from one of four classes—Paladin, Crusader, Necromancer, and Assassin—in an attempt to destroy the last of the three Serpent Riders. Featuring *Quake*-style polygonal enemies (in fact, the PC version of *Hexen 2* was created with the *Quake* engine) and real 3D environments, *Hexen 2* looks hot. Note: These shots are from the PC version.

· Deathtrap Dungeon ·

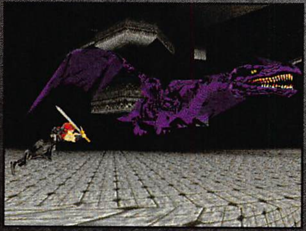
EIDOS · ADVENTURE · TBA

Based on Ian Livingstone's popular *Fighting Fantasy* series of game books, Eidos' forthcoming *Deathtrap Dungeon* throws the player into a third-person medieval action/adventure. Fighting to save a community from the clutches of a vile and powerful dragon, you'll traverse 10 levels of real time dungeons and face 55 unique enemies (including orcs, giant spiders, and zombies).



With magic spells, rocket launchers, grenades, and swords at your disposal, it'll be no cake ride for the forces of evil. Note: These shots are from the PC version.

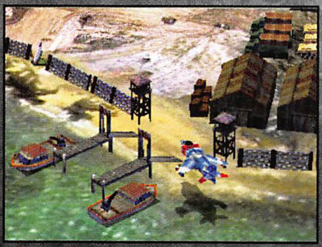




· Nuclear Strike ·

EA · SHOOTING · FALL

Electronic Arts' venerable *Strike* series continues on with this, the latest incarnation, called *Nuclear Strike*. Using an enhanced version of the *Soviet Strike* engine, *NS* carries on the highly recognizable *Strike* aesthetic. New features include the ability to pilot a Harrier jump jet in addition to the *de rigeur* Apache attack chopper. One could surmise that *Nuclear Strike* will include lots of shrapnel-bursting, hard-core, and otherwise awe-inspiring explosive action. PlayStation owners—this is one to watch for... Electronic Arts is going to rock your world in '97!!





· Ace Combat 2 ·

NAMCO · SIMULATION · AUGUST

One of the very first games available for the then-fledgling PS (*Ace Combat*) is finally getting the sequel that it deserves. Namco's *Ace Combat 2* offers up the expected graphical upgrade along with several new gameplay features, including the new "victim view" camera angle. Plane choices include the Russian Sukhoi Su35, an A6 Intruder, and an F-14 Tomcat, among others. Compatible with Sony's forthcoming analog pad, *AC2* should blow away fans (and even non-fans) of the original.







· Spawn ·

SONY · 3D ACTION · 3RD QTR.

There's no arguing, *Spawn* is about as hot as comic book characters get. So hot in fact that he's about to make that ever-so-scary transition to mainstream status. Succeed, and thou art legend. Fail and risk banishment. The HBO animated series (I've just seen the 1st 3) is hot... burning hot, and the movie looks promising. It has issues, but we'll see. The game however, a *Tomb Raider*-esque trek, in my opinion, is screaming, "I need to be hand-drawn 2D!" This chunky capeless Spawn hurts me. Will a cape be added? Will *Spawn* the game live up to McFarlane's high standards? Will I feel like a complete moron when I see the game in motion? Find out soon as a full-fledged hands-on preview is bound to take place some time soon.



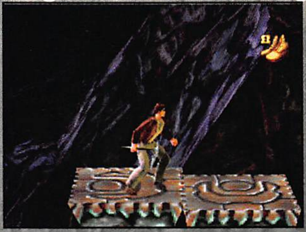


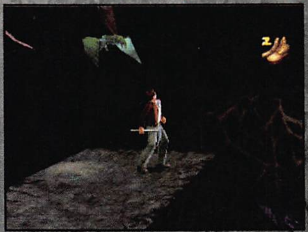


· Pitfall 3-D ·

ACTIVISION · 3D ADVENTURE · FALL

Activision's most legendary series, spanning 2 decades, is about to make its nineties debut. Looking just a little better than the Atari 2600 version, *Pitfall 3D* is an adventure packed with perilous gameplay elements steeped in precision. Platforming, battling the elements and finding items is only the beginning. I wonder if swinging vines come into play? Having been in development for nearly two years, *Pitfall* will make its 3D debut this fall. We'll preview *Pitfall 3D* next month.







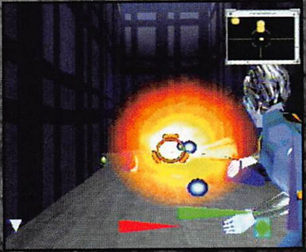
· ReBoot ·

EA · 3D ADVENTURE · FALL

If you wake up early enough on your days off you've probably seen *Reboot*, a fully SGI-rendered series that, if anyone in TV-land had any brains, would air on prime time. In the game, like in the series, Bob must save 'Mainframe' from 'Megabyte,' the villain who always crashes your MAC (kidding). Hopefully, the glistening look of the TV show will shine through in the game. Anyways, it's 3D, been years in the making, and is coming soon. So check it out.



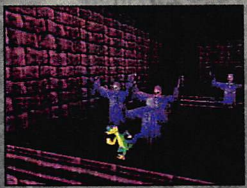




· Agent GEX ·

CRYSTAL * 3D ACTION * NOV.

We really didn't want to display this scrawny e-mail of a shot, but it' s the only thing we could use for an excuse to tell you about the new *Agent GEX*. We saw the game running at Crystal and were blown away by its *Mario*-sized levels and spectacular gameplay features. This could be the shocker game at the upcoming E3. Gex's moves combined with the 3D realm make interesting bedfellows and Gex himself is animated to a degree seldom (if ever) seen. We'll have detailed coverage, next month.



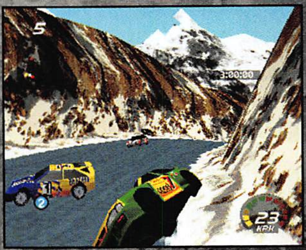


· Grand Tour ·

ACTIVISION · RACING · SEPT.

Though early, *GT'98* is quite impressive, both for the quality of its visuals and for the variety in its courses and vehicles. All of the six tracks are fully realized 3D worlds with six unique course layouts. Some course variations remove roadside barriers altogether, allowing you to go basically anywhere. And with locations including Egypt, Switzerland, Scotland, Moscow, Hong Kong, and Easter Island, the scenery is always interesting. It can even be snowing or raining, noon or sunset. The vehicles themselves run the gamut as well with Indy cars, rally, Dakar, sports, and even dune buggies. Activision is promising analog control as well as four player mode which uses the PS link cable.



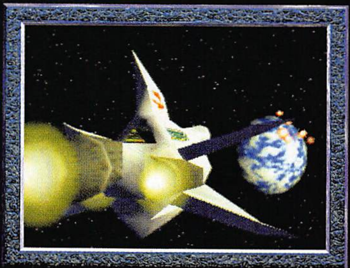






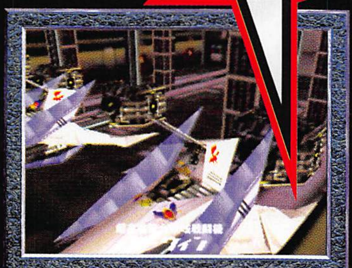
THE FORCES OF ANDROSS ATTACK THE LYLAT SYSTEM ONCE MORE! ONLY THE STARFOX SQUADRON CAN SAVE CORNERIA NOW...

STARFOX 64™









The N64's been taking a lot of flak recently. Everywhere you turn you hear people complaining: "There aren't enough games," "The games are too expensive," "None of the games are as good as *Mario 64*," "Cartridges suck," "Only Nintendo knows the hardware," "Nintendo's dying in Japan," "Blah, blah, blah." And all of this may be true. But the simple fact is, without N64 there would be no *Mario 64*. There would be no *WaveRace*, no *Blast Corps*, no *Doom 64*, no *Turok*, and most importantly: there would be no *StarFox 64*. And that, my friends, would be a bad thing. Because *StarFox 64* is truly awesome. Oh yes it is. And over the next four pages I'm going to tell you why.

I must confess, I've always had a soft spot for SNES *StarFox* (or *StarWing* as it's called in England). It may have run at less than 15 fps with a bare minimum of flat shaded polygons (revolutionary for the time) but the gameplay was excellent, the music was exceptional and the whole thing just 'felt' right. That's very important to me: the 'feel' of a game. From the real-time intro to the ball-firing weapon power-up to the chunky red and white space shuttles that appeared at the end of the Space Armada level, *StarFox* was the perfect example of how good game design can overcome technical limitations and suspend disbelief.

But that was over five years ago. Things have changed a lot since then. A hundred flat shaded polygons have become









DOES IT JOLT OR RUMBLE? YOU DECIDE...

StarFox 64 comes packed with N64's latest peripheral: the Jolt Pack. The pack connects to your pad via the memory pak port and causes the whole controller to shake in accordance with the on-screen action. However, given the rather subdued nature of the shaking we feel it should be re-named the Vibrate Pack. The pack can shake at varying frequencies and intensities to convey different types of 'jolt,' but to me it just feels like an electric toothbrush.

R REVIEW — NINTENDO64

DEVELOPER - NINTENDO	# OF PLAYERS - 1-4
PUBLISHER - NINTENDO	DIFFICULTY - MEDIUM
FORMAT - 96-MEG CARTRIDGE	AVAILABLE - SUMMER



KNIGHTMARE
Never leave your wingman!






DRIVE YOUR TANK ACROSS SUN-SCORCHED DESERTS!



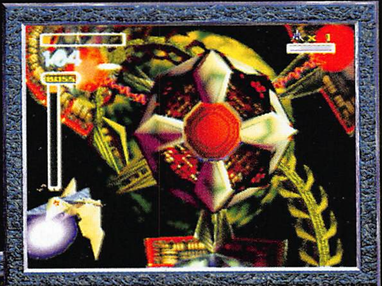

STUNNING BOSS BATTLES IN GLORIOUS 3D!



hundreds of thousands of texture mapped, anti-aliased, mip-mapped polygons. *StarFox*'s 8-meg cart has become *StarFox 64*'s 96-meg cart. The technical limitations that posed such a problem to the original *StarFox* have been effectively removed, and NCL has been able to let their imaginations run riot. But—and thank Miyamoto for this—the 'feel' is still there.




First of all, the graphics are just stunning. I'd seen plenty of video footage of the game before I plugged it in for the first time, but it was still a shock to see it in motion. *StarFox 64* is truly a thing of beauty. Some of the object models may be basic, but their actual design is excellent (you've gotta love that tank), the textures are clean and the frame rate stays pretty much at a constant 30 fps, no matter how insane the polygon






LOST? THEN CHECK YOUR STAR MAP...

StarFox 64 contains 15 different levels, but the main path only takes you through seven. If you want to see the rest, you're going to have to work for it. Nearly all the planets contain secret exits which you can only access by meeting specific objectives on that level, such as flying under all the arches, shooting all the lights, destroying a main enemy, etc. This means that, once you know what you're doing, you can create your own path through the planets!



DESTROY GROUND FORCES WITH THE LANDMASTER ATTACK TANK!





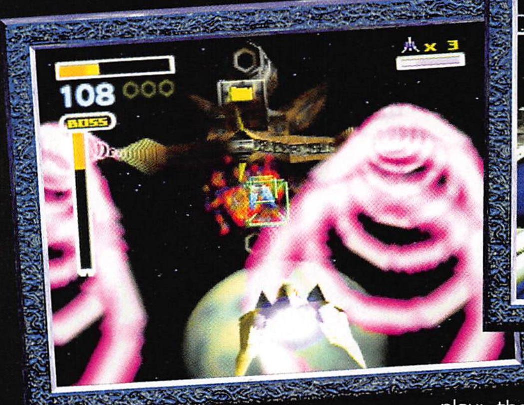

count gets. However, what really impresses is the attention to detail. Little touches like the way your arwing kicks up a spray when it flies near water, or the tracks that your tank leaves as it drives though the sand on Katina, really draw you into the game. There is some pop-up on the space levels, and the submarine stage (Aquas) is way too dark for my liking, but by the time you reach one of the many elaborate end level bosses, all is forgiven.

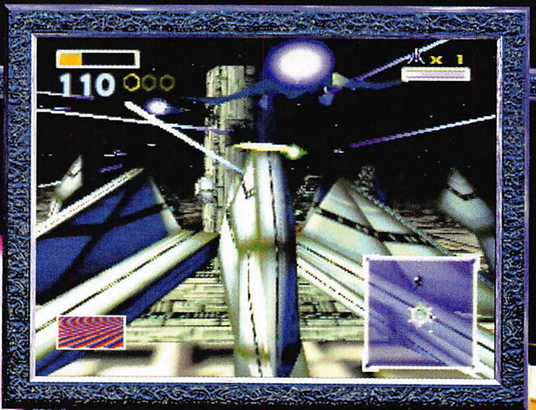
But what about the sound? Well, consider this: *StarFox 64* is a 96 meg cart, and ***32*** of those megs are dedicated solely to sound. 32 megs!!! That's four times the size of the original *StarFox* cart JUST FOR SOUND! The sound effects are cool enough, but the real reason for this is the vast amount of sampled speech contained on the cart. You remember how, in *StarFox*, all the characters would talk in their own 'Zabz-Zaba Odulabua' language and you'd have to read the sub-titles? Well now they speak English!! All 23 characters! And a lot of it, too. This adds a lot to the dramatic





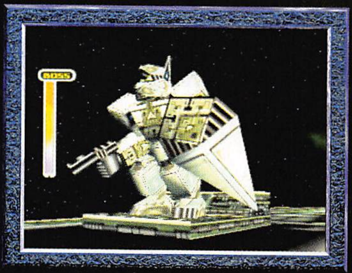
impact of the game, and believe it or not, most of time they're actually saying something useful. Amazing! Unfortunately, the music isn't half as impressive, and while Koji Kondo's composition isn't bad, the sound quality really lets the side down. Personally I would have preferred better music and less speech, but I guess that's just the nature of the cartridge beast.







StarFox 64's 15 main levels are divided up into two types of gameplay: the traditional 'on rails' levels, and the all new 360-degree 'fly anywhere' levels. As you might expect, the 'on rails' levels play almost identically to the original *StarFox*, with your vehicle (be it arwing, tank or submarine) following a pre-determined path through the environment, leaving you free to concentrate on blasting enemies and avoiding obstacles. There are a couple of nice new twists on the old formula (such as multiple routes through certain levels) but other









PILOT TWO ALL-NEW ATTACK VEHICLES FOR THE STARFOX TEAM!



In StarFox 64 you get to pilot two new vehicles in addition to your standard arwing—a tank or a submarine depending on what planet you're attempting. All three craft have similar control (like SNES **StarFox**) although each has its own special ability. The arwing can loop the loop (useful for dog fighting) or in the 360 levels, flip 180; the tank can hover momentarily and the submarine has a limitless supply of automatically locking missiles. Both the arwing and tank can also utilize a lock-on technique similar to **Panzer Dragoon Zwei**. By holding down the fire button you charge up a powerful ball of green plasma that can lock on to a target and destroy multiple enemies in a single hit. Mastering the lock-on is the key to high scores.



USE THE LANDMASTER OR ATTACK CLASS SUBMARINE!

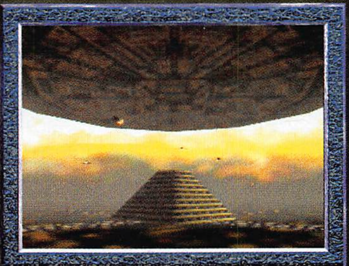








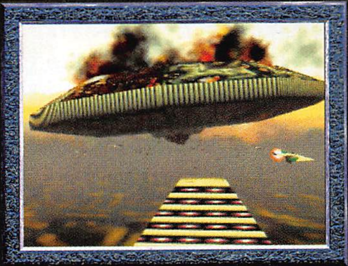






than that, it's pretty much *StarFox* with new vehicles and better graphics.

The 360-degree levels, however, are a different story. They're like the snowspeeder stage from *Shadows Of The Empire*, only with more enemies. The environmental detail may not be as lavish as the 'on rails' levels, but the arenas are a decent size, and after following a set path for so long the freedom of movement is very liberating. There are some evil CPU-controlled characters to dogfight against (the StarWolf Team), and even though it takes a while to adapt to the new style of play, these levels add a welcome element of diversity.



The original *StarFox* was a very theatrical game, and *Starfox 64* continues this tradition in force. Not only are all the real-time cut scenes very cinematic, but the premise for several of the later levels are taken directly from contemporary sci-fi movies. Witness the Titania level where you and a squadron of arwings take on literally hundreds of alien ships while a giant disc-shaped mothership maneuvers into firing position over the colony you are defending. A blatant rip off of *Independence Day*? Probably. Excellent fun? Definitely. Miyamoto said he wanted the game to feel like an interactive "B" movie, and to his credit he has succeeded.

As I mentioned already, *StarFox 64* just 'feels' right. By that I mean: all of the various elements of production (graphics, sound, gameplay, level design) have come together perfectly to create a cohesive whole that makes playing *StarFox 64* a truly special experience. I got that feeling with the original *StarFox* five years ago, and I'm getting it again now with *StarFox 64*. Any criticisms? Well, the music is pretty weak, the graphics are occasionally less than 64-bit and I suppose the gameplay hasn't developed *that* much since the first installment (though in my opinion that works in the game's favor). But these are all moot points at best. The fact is: *StarFox 64* is a really great 3D shooter. The first time you play it you'll be in awe, and even after the novelty wears off you'll spend months trying to obtain medals on every level. After the minorly disappointing (but still fun) *Mario Kart 64*, NCL have found their way back in my good books with *StarFox 64*. As far as I'm concerned, this is up there with *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* at the pinnacle of 3D shooters, and deserves a place in every N64 owner' s collection. Besides, what *StarFox* player can resist the chance to find out what really happened to Fox's father... *K*

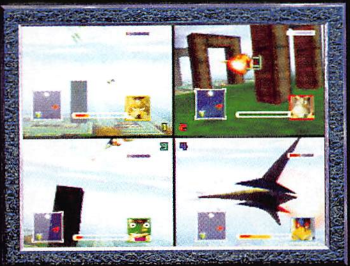






SPACE CADET TRAINING BEGINS HERE! FOUR-PLAYER Vs ACTION IS THE HOTTEST YET!

I must admit, when I first heard that **StarFox 64** was going to have a VS mode I thought it was going to be for novelty value only. Boy, was I wrong! Four-player dogfighting is awesome! You start with two different 360-degree arenas (Sector Y and Corneria) and the idea is to simply be the first player to reach the allotted number of kills. The arenas are pretty sparse, but the frame rate is excellent and you can see a long way. Not bad for chicken!







RAVEN'S CORRIDOR CLASSIC COMES TO N64

HEXEN

ZAP, HACK, BLUDGEON, BURN, AND FREEZE YOUR ENEMIES!







When *Hexen* came out on PC at the end of '95, it was hailed as one of the greatest first person shooters ever made. The graphics engine was superior to its nearest rival, *Doom 2*, and developer Raven Software introduced a number of innovative gameplay features that elevated *Hexen* above the quagmire of substandard *Doom* clones and into the realms of genre leader. But that was over a year ago, and corridor games have come on in leaps and bounds since then. The question is: Does a conversion of a year-old PC title have what it takes to compete with the likes of *PowerSlave* or *Turok*? Well, as with most things in life, the answer isn't simple.

As a straight conversion of the PC original, *Hexen 64* delivers the goods. The frame rate is smooth (though not quite as smooth as *Doom 64*), while the now-customary N64 mip-mapping gives the wall and ceiling textures a nice 'solid' feel. The level design, item placement, monster animation (slightly better than *Doom 64*), and weapon balance are all identical to the PC—right down to the inclusion of the Dark Servant power-up that wasn't in the PS or Saturn version. The sound effects are also excellent, high quality and entirely appropriate.

However, there are some serious thorns on the *Hexen 64* rose. Firstly, the game loads. Not badly, but around 10 seconds every time you change level. Secondly, the music just plain sucks. Software Creations has attempted to reproduce the PC Redbook audio tunes on the N64 with absolutely no success what-

ZOOM OR SMOOTH?



LIKE *DOOM 64*, *HEXEN 64* USES N64 HARDWARE MIP-MAPPING TO ERADICATE THE BLOCKY PIXELS ON ENEMY SPRITES WHEN THEY SCALE TOO CLOSE. BUT THIS GIVES THE APPEARANCE OF THE ENEMIES BEING 'OUT OF FOCUS' WHICH TO SOME IS MORE DISTRACTING THAN THE PIXELS. *HEXEN 64* GIVES YOU THE OPTION TO TURN OFF THE MIP-MAPPING AND GO WITH THE ORIGINAL PC SPRITES SHOULD YOU SO WISH. COOL!

R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - SOFTWARE CREATIONS

PUBLISHER - GT INTERACTIVE

FORMAT - CARTRIDGE

OF PLAYERS - 1-4

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - JUNE '97



KNIGHTMARE
Hexen is, was and always will be a great corridor game. So bite me.



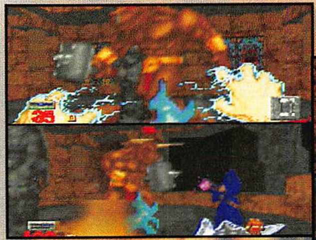


soever. *Doom 64*-style ambient environmental sounds would have been infinitely better. Thirdly, the game comes with only two pre-set button configurations: one for the analog stick and one for the d-pad. The d-pad set up isn't bad, but the analog set-up is truly horrible! The Z trigger is 'strafe on' (you can't turn and strafe at the same time) making it impossible to circle an enemy! Doh! This renders analog control (one of the best things about *Doom 64* and *Turok*) completely useless, and Software Creations is to be given a good slap up side the head for committing such a cardinal sin.





Despite this somewhat irritating setback (better get used to that d-pad!), the strength of Raven's original game design *still* shines through. *Hexen* (and now *Hexen 64*) combines all the violence and action of *Doom* with cunning puzzles, a non-linear level structure and your choice of one of three different character classes, each with their own weapons and physical attributes. Once you get used to the d-pad, control is actually pretty good, and the fantasy setting is extremely effective (at points the level design borders on genius). Plus, *Hexen* is one of the few first-person shooters that works equally well as both a single player quest AND a multiplayer deathmatch extravaganza (see side panel).



DEATHMATCH!!!



HEXEN 64 IS THE FIRST HOME CORRIDOR GAME EVER TO FEATURE FOUR-PLAYER SIMULTANEOUS SPLIT-SCREEN DEATHMATCH! YOU CAN FIGHT ON ANY LEVEL YOU WANT, WITH OR WITHOUT MONSTERS. UNFORTUNATELY, IN DEATHMATCH MODE THE GAME TAKES A DROP IN DETAIL AND THINGS GET A LOT DARKER (YOUR FIELD OF VISION IS REDUCED) IN ORDER TO KEEP UP THE SPEED. ON A BIG TV IT'S GOOD FUN, BUT IT'S NOTHING LIKE PLAYING ON A PC NETWORK. STILL, IT'S A LOT CHEAPER THAN FOUR PCS, AND WITH TWO PLAYERS IT'S REALLY NOT THAT BAD AT ALL, EVEN IF YOU CAN SEE WHERE YOU OPPONENT IS! *HEXEN 64* IS DEATHMATCH FOR THE MASSES. HURRAH!



For a true corridor aficionado, such as myself, *Hexen 64* is a real treat. It may just be a nicer looking version of *Hexen*, but in my opinion, *Hexen* is still one of the best corridor games out there. There's just so much to it. If you like corridor games and have never played through a version of *Hexen* before, I highly recommend you give it a try. If, on the other hand, you're not a fan of the genre (or more specifically, you didn't like *Doom 64*) then this isn't exactly going to light your flame. ***K***





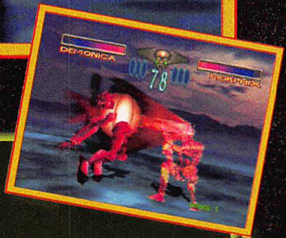












NOW THAT'S A DARK RIFT!

























Kronos, makers of both Eternal Champions (for the Sega Genesis and CD) and Criticom (for the Saturn and PlayStation), has crafted their first N64 game and surprisingly, it's a fighter. Why am I surprised? Well, because thus far they've not had much success in this hardest of hard genres. While Eternal Champions was a decent Genesis game, it had some major issues. and as for Criticom, well, let's just say it was less than spectacular. So with Dark Rift I wasn't expecting much and therefore, was quite surprised. The game actually plays really well in a Soul Blade meets MK sort of way, with a Tekken-ish combo system served up on the side. The characters however, while well designed, do not

R REVIEW

NINTENDO 64

DEVELOPER - KRONOS	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - VIC-TOKAI	DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
FORMAT - 64MEG CART	AVAILABLE - MAY



E. STORM
A solid polygon fighter, yes. But a testament to 64-bit technology... uh...no.

appear superior to, or even as good as, those found in similar 3D fare for other systems (in terms of t-mapped polygons) such as Tekken, Tobal 1&2, Star Gladiators, Soul Blade, Fighting Vipers, etc... Sad, considering the BGs are flat and this is 64-bit hardware. So what we're left with is a 32-bit game in a 64-bit case. Oh, the joys of the cartridge format! To take it a step further, on the PS, where polygon BGs could have been implemented along with a wider assortment of characters, Dark Rift would have been more at home. Of course it wouldn't sell nearly as well, hence the big N on the box. Regardless, this may be the first case where Nintendo's hardware actually worked against the developers (if indeed more memory would have equated to polygon BG's). But hey,

















ENDLESS PLAYFIELDS ALLOW CLOSE HAND-TO-HAND DUELING AS WELL AS THE OPTION TO AVOID ATTACKS BY RETREATING OR OUT-MANEUVERING YOUR OPPONENT



even the junkiest N64 software is selling in droves (Cruis'n continues to plague top ten charts). With a user base so starved I'm looking for representation from Sally Struthers, I can't blame Vic for choosing the N64. especially after Sony rejected DR some time ago.







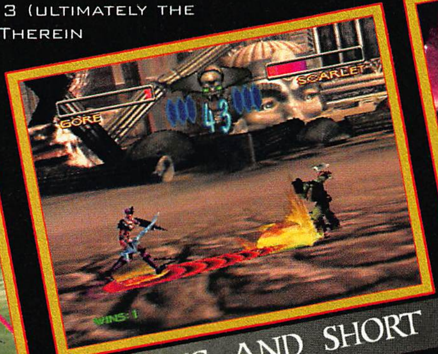


In DR's defense, I'm confident that those who purchase it won't be necessarily disappointed, just a bit puzzled by its 32-bitness. The game does have many admirable nuances such as the training mode, xlnt music (at times), great projectile special effects, vertical and horizontal combos, very cool characters in a solid comic book universe, and smooth 60fps animation. A suitable degree of balance and depth, as well as some inspired camera work you'll also find.

So, I'll sum it up this way; Dark Rift is better than War Gods (the closest thing in terms of available N64 fighters) but it's just not on par with the likes of Fighting Vipers, Tobal #2, Soul Blade, Street Fighter EX, Star Gladiators, and Tekken 3 (ultimately the games Rift will be compared to).Therein lies the perril for N64 owners everywhere.











PROJECTILE CAPABILITIES--LONG AND SHORT RANGE... LET 'EM FLY!





ADVANCED HORIZONTAL COMBOS

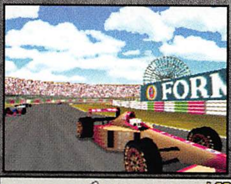
Aaron	▲ ◀ ◀ ▲ ▲ ← + ◀ ← + ◀
Demonica	◀ ◀ ▲ ◀ ▲ ↓ + ◀ ↓ + ◀ ▲
Eve	◀ ◀ ▲ ◀ ◀ ↓ + ▲ → + ▲
Gore	◀ ◀ ↓ + ◀ ◀ ↓ + ▲ ▲
Morphix	◀ ◀ ◀ ▲ ↓ + ◀ ↓ + ◀ ▲ B
Nikki	◀ ◀ ▼ ← + ▼ ↓ + ▲ ↓ + ▲
Scarlet	◀ ◀ ↓ + ◀ ▲ B
Zenmuron	◀ ◀ ▲ ▼ ▼ ▼ ← + ▼ ▼



· F1 Pole Position ·

UBI · SIMULATION · SUMMER

If you tuned in last month you saw a smidgen of *Human GP*. Well, here it is in its US form as *F1PP*. This is one of the finest F1 sims I've ever



played as it's a true season sim in every way. If UBI can solve the redraw problem, *F1* will be a joy, with 22 cars, 30 drivers, and 16 tracks!









· Mission: Impossible ·

OCEAN · ACT/STG · JUNE

The much, I mean *mucho* talked out *Mission: Impossible*, a game said to combine not only great action and visual splendor but complex AI as well, will finally see a GF preview next month. By the looks of things, it's been well worth the wait.











· Tonic Trouble ·

UBI · ACTION · SPRING '98

Okay, picture this. Ed the extraterrestrial, on a jaunt through our solar system, accidentally drops a can onto Earth, the contents of which cause strange unnatural reactions all over the planet (the nature of which we're not sure yet). Anyway, some evil dude that goes by the handle of Grogh the Hellish wants this can to help him take over the world, and it's your job as Ed, solving puzzles while avoiding enemy attacks and traps, to retrieve the can and save our humble green planet. Taking place within a "real-time, 3D graphically stunning, cartoon-like environment," *Tonic Trouble* looks awesome, but of course, time will tell. More as we get it...















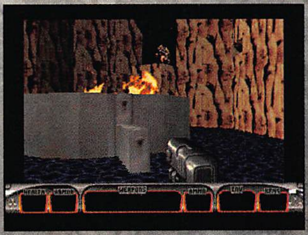


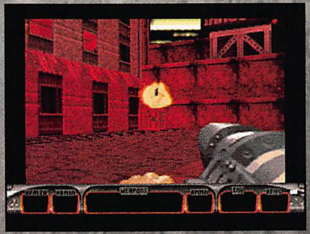


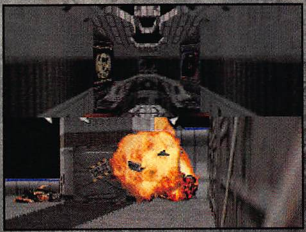
· Duke Nukem ·

DUKE NUKEM · CORRIDOR · SUMMER

Here's the last "glimpse" you'll get of *Duke 64*. Next month a playable will be ours so expect eye bleeding coverage from Knightmare, corridor hound extraordinaire.











· Dracula 3D ·

KONAMI · 3D ACT/ADV · 4TH QTR.

Like it or not, *Castlevania* is goin' 3D. Honestly, after the 2D PS game I can't blame KCET as 2D of that magnitude would be hard to top on the cart format. These dev. shots are hyper early and are only meant to whet our appetites. Of course the finished graphics will be much smoother etc..





MACE
The Dark Age

MIDWAY · FIGHTING · TBA

From Midway, via Atari games, comes *Mace*. Drawing from the power of the voodoo graphics chip (used first in *San Francisco Rush*) this newly released arcade fighter will be a challenge to port onto the N64. Mace plays similar to *Soul Blade* in that it's weapon based and displays like a million polygons. *Rush* is coming too, by the way. Let's hope the N64 is up to the task at hand. Actual shots (these are coin-op) should be coming soon.









SO, YOU THINK YOU'VE SEEN ALL THE SEGA SATURN HAS TO OFFER?
WELL THINK AGAIN-
WITH SONIC JAM THE BEGINNINGS OF YUJI NAKA'S NEW 3D ENGINE BEGINS TO EMERGE... AND IT'S A SHOCKER!



P PREVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - VARIED
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SUMMER



E. STORM
Sega's seeing blue again and all at once things are beginning to gel.

SONIC JAM™

What would it take to get you to play all 4 *Sonic* cartridge classics again? Hooking up the old Genesis, if you've even got one any more, is an issue, not to mention rounding up all 4 games. So would you buy a CD compilation to have all 4 forever engraved on one CD? How about if Sega threw in digitized versions of each American and Japanese instruction manual (which can be manipulated page by page), a compilation of each and every musical selection, pages and pages of hi-rez *Sonic* art, and tons of *Sonic* history. Ah, now we're talking. That would indeed equate to one dandy package of 16-bit memorabilia. But *Sonic Jam* doesn't stop there. The most spectacular offering in this ultimate compilation is the inclusion of one vast area of 3D gameplay that goes far beyond anything previously seen on the Saturn. A world not only vast, but free of pop-up, with gorgeous textures (beyond, dare I say, no, I dare not), 30fps animation and 6 mini games! This splendid example of the Saturn's true 3D power is actually the beginnings of Yuji Naka's new 3D *Sonic* game which will debut at the upcoming E3. However, as awesome as *Jam*'s 3D is, Sega tells us the actual game in progress looks even better! If this is true, Saturn owners will be enjoying a vast 3D *Sonic* game a la *SM64* and *Tomb Raider*, from the master himself, before the year's out!



Project Sonic, take one...





The games: Sonic 1, 2, 3 & Sonic & Knuckles







Check out the gallery, sound museum, theater, or Sonic History!

Sonic World; the games within it, and the attractions...









Where's the pop-up!?







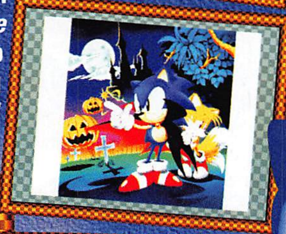




The new Sonic 3D engine rivals any out there and is being used for the next big Sonic game! Coming this Winter!







They sure took their time about it!

Jam's featured games, of which only two were available for this preview, remain the same, except for Sonic's spin dash which has been added to both *Sonics* one and two. Any other added features such as new endings etc., will be flushed out when we review *Sonic Jam* upon completion.

With *Project Sonic* in full swing, *Rayearth*, *Silhouette Mirage*, *Last Bronx*, *VF3*, *Grandia*, and other such superb titles in the works and two more secret weapons waiting in the wings, Sega's poised to close out '97 in style! *ES*



The Sonic and Tails duo: alive and well in polygon land!







BLODIA - STANDARD TYPE

BX-02 BLODIA • BX-04S SWORDSMAN • BX-07R RIOT





CYBERBOTS

The Saturn conversion of Cyberbots (one of Capcom's lesser known 1994 coin-ops) has been a long time in the making. Since Capcom originally announced the conversion over a year ago, the project has been delayed, canceled, re-started, delayed some more, upgraded to take advantage of SNK's memory cartridge then finally released. Between the coin-op's age and the Saturn conversion's troubled development I was worried that the end results wouldn't be up to Capcom's usual standards, but thankfully, nothing could be further from the truth.




Even though I haven't played the Cyberbots coin-op that much, our resident Capcom expert(s) reliably inform me that this is an incredibly accurate conversion. Obviously certain details had to be compromised (the arcade was 300 Meg) but as far as we can tell, with the SNK RAM cartridge, Saturn Cyberbots retains practically all of the animation frames of the arcade, both for the characters and backgrounds. Admittedly the speech samples are poor, but the FX and music are spot on, and the speech was never that good in the first place. Bottom line, if you're a fan of the coin-op you're going to be more than happy with this. Ok, that's my conversion disclaimer out of the way, now on to the game itself.

Regardless of how accurate the port is, as a stand alone Saturn title Cyberbots pushes the system to new levels of 2D insanity. If you're one of the legion of Saturn owners who crave 2D then Cyberbots is the game to satiate you - it's a veritable festival of hand drawn art! The mechs animate with uncanny fluidity (even the throws eject spent cartridges), while the backgrounds are among the most detailed I've ever seen. Witness the Megalopolis where buildings crumble, civilians run for cover, helicopters circle the action and





SUPER HEAVY-WEIGHT CLASS FIGHTING!

FLAMES AND DESTRUCTION INFLICTED UPON THE EARTH BY GIANT MECHANICAL WAR MACHINES!





RF-004 REPTOS • RF-009 LIGHTNING • RF-027 JACKAL

REPTOS - HIGH-SPEED TYPE

HIGH-OUTPUT TYPE - GULDIN

GP-N1 GULDIN • GP-V4 VISE • GP-D2 CYCLONE







BOOST BUTTON PRODUCES HIGH-SPEED MOBILE WARFARE! FINISH ENEMIES WITH THE 'CYBER EX' SUPER ATTACK!

fire engines show up to put out the fires you started. Admittedly you need the RAM cart to fully appreciate all the finer details of the animation (which effectively gives the Saturn a third more memory), but even without it the game looks pretty good.



But how does it play? Well, it's a Capcom 2D beat 'em up—how do you think it plays? It plays like SF2! Even though Capcom have implemented a number of interesting gameplay features (like weapon attacks, a 'dash' button that lets you hover in the air and the ability to rip your opponents weapon arm off), the basic mechanics are SF2 all the way. Anyone experienced with any of Capcom's other 2D fighters will find themselves on familiar territory. To be honest, with only three attack buttons (Light attack, heavy attack and Weapon) Cyberbots leans more towards the X-Men school of 'button bashing' gameplay than the precision of SF2, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. There's still a great deal of depth and strategy in there, it's just easier to just pick up and play than any of the SF series.

At present, Cyberbots is slated for a fourth quarter release in the States. Lets hope that it has something to do with Sega getting the memory cart out here first. Games like Samurai Shodown 3, KOF '96, Metal Slug and now Cyberbots all demonstrate how, with the aid of a $20 cartridge, the Saturn can be transformed into a 2D powerhouse without equal. Both Capcom and SNK will continue to support the cart (in Japan) and that can only mean more accurate conversions of all their future 2D coin-op ports. Saturn 2D has never looked so bright. *K*

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
- PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1 OR 2
- DIFFICULTY - MODERATE
- AVAILABLE - N/A



KNIGHTMARE
I love my RAM cartridge!



Cyberbots contains a massive 17 characters: 12 regular bots, 3 sub-bosses, a main boss and a hidden character. The regular bots are divided up into four classes: Blodia (standard type), Reptos (high speed), Guildin (high-output), and Fordy (high mobility). All four of the robots in each class have the same upper body, albeit with different weapons and attacks.





SELECT AN ARMORED WARRIOR FROM FOUR CLASSES! HIDDEN ROBOTS AWAIT...







FZ-100 FORDY • FZ-202 TARANTULA • FZ-900J KILLER BEE

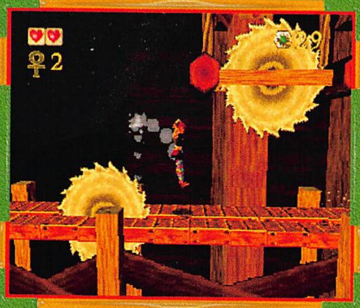
HIGH-MOBILITY TYPE - FORDY















POLYGONAL PERILS!!

It's about time! *Pandemonium* is finally being released for the Saturn, months and months after the PS version. It may be a little late, but Crystal Dynamics' cool 2.5D platformer has made a truly stunning translation. Quick story break: Nikki is an apprentice practicing spells with her buddy Fargus the jester. She goes overboard with a strange incantation, and the realm is swallowed by a giant demon. Time to set things straight again!

First things first, let me explain the "stunning" part. The graphics, while not an enormous task for the Saturn, are amazing. Pseudo-transparencies, ridiculously effective light-sourcing, and a fantastic frame rate simply astonish. If you thought the PS effects were impossible to replicate on the Saturn, well, you thought wrong.

Secondly, the joy that is the Saturn pad (preferably the Japanese pad!) transforms platforming into a perfect experience. Honestly, the control is identical to the PS version, including the slightly irritating double-jump (you must press jump again at the exact peak of the first jump), but, per usual, the Saturn pad provides platforming excellence.

O.K., enough of the side by side comparisons, let's talk gameplay. *Pandemonium* is a 22 level platformer's dream. Using the cartwheeling Fargus, or the double jumping (argh!) Nikki, you'll be facing countless platform-ridden environments filled with slides, spikes, falling boulders, fireballs, and a huge assortment of enemies (ranging from strange man-beasts to giant spiders and dinosaurs). The level design is superb; you're faced with a perfect balance of tough platforming over desert, cavernous, and forest levels, each filled with various power-ups (like freezing and shrinking rays) and crazed end bosses.

Well, I'm out of space, so I'll tell you that 1) It's a great conversion, and 2) *Pandemonium* is a really good game. Er...cool, enjoy! **G**



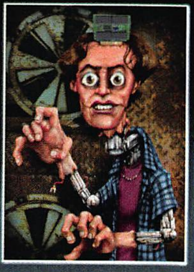
CREATURE COMFORTS!

Nikki and Fargus can morph into many cool forms, including (see above) a ram-happy Rino, a high-jumping Frog, a flame-spitting dragon, and this...umm...*slow* turtle. P.S. You morph into the turtle just in time for an insane platforming section littered with spinning saw blades...what a cruel joke!

R REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
- PUBLISHER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
- AVAILABLE - NOW



GLITCH
2.5D platforming joy on Saturn!

MASS DESTRUCTION

BMG's *Mass Destruction* is an extremely solid game. Put aside the amazingly efficient 60 fps engine, and the ultra-polished environments, and *Mass D* still astounds with pinpoint control and excellent play-mechanics. Besides, this is the first cool tank game since *Granada X*, and it's on the Saturn.

Mass Destruction lives up to its name. Split up between five campaigns and a total of almost 20 hard-core missions, you'll literally be blasting everything and anybody to bits. That's right, almost the entire polygonal playfield can be shot, torched, or blown to tiny pieces. The firing control is smooth; you use the L and R buttons to rotate your turret, so you can move and fire simultaneously. Machine guns, flame throwers, grenade launchers, and missiles are all at your disposal, ready to rock buildings and enemies into a fiery death. You'll be hard pressed to care about your mission when there's so much to be victimized, but stick to it and you'll see some very impressive level design.





"Machine guns, flame throwers, grenade launchers, and missles are at your disposal, ready to rock buildings and enemies into a fiery death."

Thankfully the missions aren't strict to the point of detracting from the glory of mindless blasting. Actually, I enjoy the substance, it's kind of like *Soviet Strike* in a tank. The missions are comprised of your basic search-and-destroy (specific buildings and such), prevention (stopping military convoys, etc.), and tough battles with special groups of enemies. Fact is, the gameplay is designed in such a way that it keeps you busy constantly, so wheather or not you give a rat's ass about your "Mission" you'll always be on a mission to kill.

Australian developer NMS has put together a sound game, in all ways. Not only does *Mass D* peak at 60 frames per second, it stays that way, no matter how much destruction fills the screen. Lately very few developers have taken advantage of the Saturn hardware, so this is a fine achievement. The sound is good too, with perfect weapon effects and cool shooter-style techno tunes. Ultimately, this isn't a major release, and you probably won't see a review this fair anywhere else... *Mass Destruction* is a cool little shooter, period. ***G***





All hell breaks loose in nearly 20 missions of hardcore blasting!!!!



REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

- DEVELOPER - NMS
- PUBLISHER - BMG
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
- AVAILABLE - MAY '97



GLITCH
Heh, heh, fire, heh, heh, BOOM!, heh, heh, heh, cool...





SKY TARGET

AM1's polygonal update of *AfterBurner*, *Sky Target*, is currently making the inevitable trek from arcade to console.

A high tech, super-secret fighter plane - the XFA-49 - has been stolen from the military and it's your unenviable task of finding it and destroying it before it falls into the hands of "another country." Who this other country is remains a mystery.

With four planes to choose from and multiple flight paths, *Sky Target* definitely bests *AfterBurner* in the variety department. And for those with a taste for the absurd, the music during the first boss encounter is not to be missed. It is truly insane, and I pray that it stays in the American release.

Sega is putting the finishing touches on the American version as we speak, so a stateside release is not that far off. Look for a full review once we receive the US final. *SD*

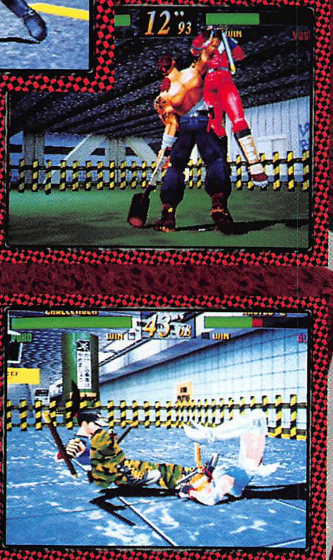
PREVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA	# OF PLAYERS - 1
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97

SUBSTANCE D I'll hit the brakes and they'll fly right by!



GET READY TO RUMBLE AT 60 FRAMES PER SECOND!!





LAST BRONX

Having absolutely nothing to do with the actual Bronx in New York, AM3's *Last Bronx* is set to join the exalted company of AM2's *VF*, *FV* and *Fighters Megamix* on the Saturn.

In an attempt by AM3 to distance their game from AM2's releases, *Last Bronx* eschews the traditional martial arts flavor of *VF* in favor of a more gritty, modern, weapon-based system. Tonfa sticks, sais, staffs, and swords complement your expected punches and kicks, and the fighting has a much more brutal edge.

As much as *VF2's* graphics impressed, Sega promises an even greater visual high for *Last Bronx*. In addition to the characters moving at a silky smooth 60fps, the backgrounds, unlike *VF2*'s, are to be both h-res and fully 3D. No more flat scrolling BGs for us, thankyou very much.

AM3 is putting a lot of effort into making *Last Bronx* something very special indeed. They're also taking time to add some juicy Saturn exclusive modes which have yet to be revealed. Look for much more on *LB* as it develops. *SD*

PREVIEW | SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SEGA	# OF PLAYERS - 1-2
PUBLISHER - SEGA	DIFFICULTY - N/A
FORMAT - CD	AVAILABLE - SUMMER '97

SUBSTANCE D Rumble in the Bronx!

GAMEFAN NEWS NETWORK PRESENTS:

THE INDUSTRY'S FIRST CONSOLE-BASED INTERNET PERIPHERAL...

SEGA SATURN

NetLink

THE SATURN GOES ON-LINE...

by: GLITCH

What is the NetLink?

The Net Link is a modem peripheral designed exclusively for the Sega Saturn. Not unlike PC modems, the Net Link allows Internet access and many popular features, such as e-mail and chatting. It operates at a speedy 28.8 bps, enabling quick access to the World Wide Web and mail and downloading services.

Is the Saturn/Net Link combo a viable interface?

Yes and no. The Net Link's first browser disc - version 2.0 - offered the most basic of services. It was fine for surfing the web and sending e-mail, but it offered very little in the way of extra features, and its speed was questionable (for example large image files loaded up *slowly*). As '97 rolled around, Sega's Net Link-only website, PlanetWeb*, began to list all Net Link compatible Newsgroups and Chatrooms. While this wasn't the improved browser Net Link users were hoping for, it did show Sega's committment to the 'net capabilities of their peripheral.

Finally, in April, Sega offered a free beta test version of their latest browser, downloadable through PlanetWeb. Highly requested features, like IRC chat capabilities, frames, and even improved menus and headers, made their way into the new browser. Of course the new browser would have been infinitely cooler if you didn't have to download it into the Saturn's RAM every single time you turn the system on... but when you're dealing with a little over 2 megs, that's the price to pay. Thankfully the finalized browser will be available on CD (for a mere 20-25$), and if the first disc was any indication, loading time will not be an issue.

•••BROWSER ver. 1.118•••

- accelerated connection times
- one-touch keyboard functions
- faster GIF file rendering
- improved BG loading
- frames now visible as links
- screen updates without flicker
- more efficient use of Saturn RAM
- full IRC support
- outgoing mail retained if server fails
- increased mail list compression
- enhanced color capabilities
- more chat commands supported

What kind of peripherals does the Net Link support?

At this point the Net Link supports the Sega Mouse and most PC compatible keyboards. Sega will also be offering their own keyboard, a compact, QWERTY design. The mouse connects directly to the Saturn while PC keyboards require a low-cost keyboard adapter. An interesting note: In conjunction with the updated browsers, the keyboard may be used to move the on-screen pointer (arrow). It might also be incorporated into future Net Link titles as a control method.

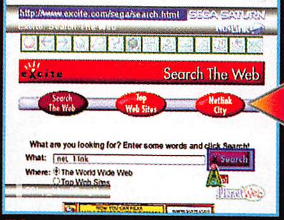
How much is the Net Link, what's included, and where can you get it?

The Net Link retails at around $199.99, and can be found at most electronic, game, and department stores. It includes the modem itself, registration information (including an optional free month of unlimited service with Concentric Network), and approximately 25 feet of phone cable.

•••NET LINK FEATURES•••



This is Net link CIty. It's the first thing you see every time you turn on the Net Link. Check your mail, log onto the web, or explore the vast contents of the city.



The Excite search engine is immediately accessible through Net Link City. It's a very thorough search engine that can locate virtually anything you desire.



This is one of the basic features of the Net Link browser engine, the magnifier. Using the 'C' key on the mouse, you can magnify images 2, 4 or 8 times as large



Here we have one of the newer features of the Net Link browser: the Segagram. Simple images and text can be e-mailed to a friend anytime of day or night.

...AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE SURFIN' IT PLAYS GAMES, X-BAND-STYLE!





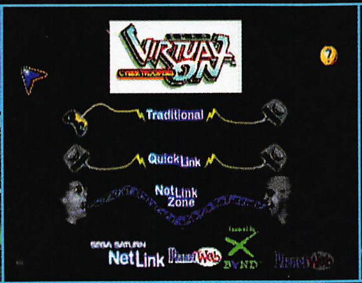


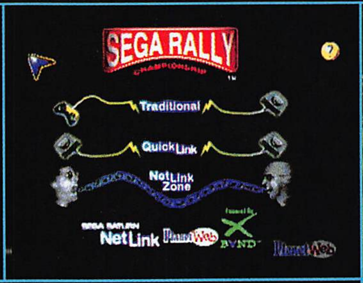
The Net Link uses X-Band technology, and as any game loads up, you'll be lead into several X-Band set-up screens (see pics, left) where you can: (1) create a code name (2) create taunts (3) set up your dialing system (4) dial or wait for a call (5) practice the game as you wait for a call (cool!) or (6) dial direct or dial the Net Link Zone.

Once in the Net Link Zone, you can access the "Lobby" area where you can check X-Band rankings, match up with players, organize tournaments, and enter IRC chat rooms to gloat, challenge, or simply chew the fat with other Net Linkers. You'll never be missing a second player again (or a third, for that matter)!

X BAND™













•••AVAILABLE GAMES•••

VIRTUAL ON

While I can appreciate Sega Rally to no end, Virtual On is truly something special. Point of fact: The entire premise of Virtual On revolves around direct 2 player head to head combat. There's no track to worry about, no environmental hazards, and, optionally, no time limits. In other words, VO simply explodes over the Net Link. Finally approaching an arcade feel at home, you'll be astounded by Virtual On's non-stop 30 fps, zero lag-time, and perfect full screen two-player action. Additionally, Sega's included a timed or Deathmatch option, arena select, and the ability to customize the color of your Virtualoid, from top to bottom. Virtual On is the most convincing testament of the Net Link's power thus far.

SEGA RALLY

I've just experienced a week of hard-core Sega Rally Net Link playing v.s. fellow editor Substance D. Apart from building a fierce grudge against each other, we've had an amazingly good time. 'Rally plays like a dream. The latency is virtually irrelevant, with absolutely no loss of detail or frame rate. In fact, except for a half-second 'hiccup', where the game simply stops dead (trust me, it's 100% harmless), it's difficult to tell you're even playing through the Net Link. All the cars and tracks are immediately available, sans code, and the loading is extremely fast. Simply consider this: 2-player Sega Rally, full screen, 30 fps. Yes, heaven.

•••COMING SOON•••

SATURN BOMBERMAN

Without Net Link, Bomberman will offer the same multi-tapped 10-player action as its Japanese brethren. Once Net Linked, however, up to four-players may play simultaneously, two on each end. This is a little disappointing, but its impact as a Net Link game should more than compensate. An interesting note: All 9 battlezones, 20 power-ups, and 5 unique dinosaurs will be included, and multiple taunts triggered by the X, Y, and Z buttons, exclusive to the Net Link version.



DAYTONA USA CCE

Although Daytona CCE's not going to be ready 'til October, it's one of the most promising titles scheduled for the Net Link. The linked-up gameplay will be exactly like 'Rally: Head to head, one on one, full screen. The graphics (specifically the frame rate) will be dramatically improved now that there's only two cars on the track, not forty. And the latency, just like every Net Link game, will be an excellent 50 milliseconds or less.




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MF
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DIG FOR DINOSAURS!

HUNT FOR FOSSILS IN GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO

Grand Prize

The DIG FOR DINOSAURS expedition!

Plus a PlayStation with a copy of Tail of the Sun and Carnage Heart!

The Grand Prize winner and one guest will travel to Grand Junction, Colorado where you will become part of a scientific research team involved in quarry excavations. The Grand Prize includes:

- Round-Trip airfare to Grand Junction, Colorado
- 5 nights accomodation during the expedition
- Transportation, food and plenty more!

First Prize (1 Winner)

A PlayStation and a copy of Tail of the Sun and Carnage Heart!

Second Prize (10 Winners)

10 PlayStation hats and T-Shirts and a subscription to GameFan magazine!



"An altogether engulfing PlayStation experience"
"Novel, in-depth, very relaxing and fun; the best caveman simulation ever!!
GAMEFAN MAGAZINE – GAME OF THE MONTH



"If you like mech-based strategy games, you'll never play one as detailed as Carnage Heart. Highly recommended"
GAMEFAN MAGAZINE

To enter the competition simply print your name, age, address (city, state and zip) and phone number on a postcard and send it to:

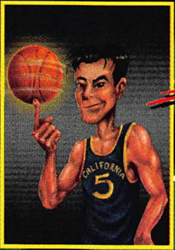
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PlayStation™

ARTDINK

GameFan "Dig for Dinosaurs" Sweepstakes 1. No Purchase Necessary to Enter. To enter, send a postcard (no envelopes please) with your name, age, address and phone number to GameFan "Dig for Dinosaurs" Sweepstakes, c/o Linzee International, 1306 Old County Road, Belmont, CA 94002. Entries must be received no later than July 31, 1997. Sony Computer Entertainment America (the "Sponsor") is not responsible for lost, late, mutilated, illegible, incomplete or misdirected entries. 2. Prizes: One (1) Grand Prize winner will receive a trip for two to dig for dinosaurs to be fulfilled by GameFan, one (1) copy of Tail of the Sun and Carnage Heart software (approximate retail value of $4,250.00). One (1) First Prize winner will receive a PlayStation game console and one (1) copy of Tail of the Sun and Carnage Heart software (approximate retail value of $250.00). Ten (10) Second Prize winners will each receive a PlayStation brand hat and t-shirt (approximate retail value of $20.00). Sponsor reserves the right to substitute prize of equal value if prize is unavailable. Prizes are non-transferable and no substitutions allowed. 3. Winners: Winners will be determined by a single random drawing of all valid entries received by the Sponsors, whose decisions are final. Drawing to be held on or about August 2, 1997. Winners shall be notified by mail and/or telephone. 4. Odds of Winning Sweepstakes: The odds of winning depends on number of valid entries received. 5. Eligibility: Promotion open to residents of United States only. Return of any prize/prize notification as undeliverable will result in disqualification and an alternate winner will be selected. Winners may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 7 days of receipt or forfeit prize. If the winner is a minor, then prize will be awarded to parent or legal guardian. By acceptance of prize, winners agree to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Employees of the Sponsor and its parent and affiliated companies and their families are not eligible. Neither the Sponsor nor its affiliates, subsidiaries, division or related companies are responsible for any damages, taxes, or expenses that winners might incur as a result of this sweepstake or receipt of prize. 6. Winners List: To obtain list of winners, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to GameFan "Dig for Dinosaurs" Sweepstakes Winners List, c/o Linzee International, 1306 Old County Road, Belmont, CA 94002. Requests for winners list must be received by September 13, 1997. Please allow 4 weeks for delivery of winners list. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. Tail of the Sun™ & Carnage Heart © 1997 Artdink.

GAMEFAN Sports



JOE KIDD

KIDD'S CORNER

At the time that I am writing this, the entire world will have already heard, but historical moments cannot go unacknowledged. You know how I proclaim Tiger Woods as "The Man"—well, he appears to be much more than that. TW is making history with his most recent domination of the Masters, making him, as his father so eloquently put it, "The Chosen One." No argument here. At 21, Eldrick "Tiger" Woods has become the youngest in 61 years to win the tournament. African-Americans are proud of their fine representative. Asian-Americans are smiling ear to ear. Kids of all ages are taking up golf to be like Tiger. And sponsors of all types are drooling over The Chosen One. NBA teams weren't watching pre-game film on opponents, they were watching the back 9. I AM... Tiger Woods—I wish! Tiger has epitomized the meaning of "At Will," a milestone, a breakthrough, a 4-minute mile for the '90s. I mean 320-yard drives, and pitching wedges on second shots?!! You gotta be kidding me. The Chosen One knows that the path has been paved by guys like Lee Elder and Jackie Robinson, guys who broke the color lines and integrated sports for the first time, and he is grateful. He is not surprised by what he has accomplished thus far, he always knew he would. You want a symbol of Tiger's effect on golf? How about over 50,000 TVs tuned into the Masters Tourney, the most ever for a golf event. Just another Nike commercial, just another GQ cover, just another Masters. Well done.

Anyone see the De La Hoya vs. Whittaker fight? I was on the road, but from what I've been told and have read, that was a blessing in disguise. The fight was described with such words as "annoying," "boring" and "weak." Well... good thing we've got Tyson vs. Holyfield II right on the horizon...

The only question in hockey seems to be how far the Avalanche will go. Taking a look at Roy's past performances in the playoffs, it looks like a one-way ticket to Stanley Cupdom... Pittsburgh's on their way out, and it could be a rude good-bye to Lemieux... Jersey could surprise...

With an injury-depleted Bulls team in the East, Miami looks like the real beast in the East... What a match-up it would be with Shaq and the Lakes vs. Zo and the Heat, possibly the most exciting prospective Finals showdown this year... NBA regular season has ended, the 'offs are upon us, coaching vacancies are popping up, and let me be the first to say "So long Adelman!" It was bad enough losing Mitch and C. Web, but losing Timmy, and soon Mullie, what's a poor Warriors fan to look forward to? Go Cohan, go Warriors! NBA MVP? Let's give it to Timmy... MJ's a lock.

To all of you who brought to our attention that we listed Firepro Wrestling by Human for the PlayStation, instead of for Sega Saturn, thank you and our apologies for the misprint. If you have any future questions regarding anything in the world of sports video games, don't hesitate to spill it. And if sports games are your thing, and I'm sure it is, otherwise you wouldn't be reading this, make sure to check out our new quarterly GSN, GameFan Sports Network, hitting the shelves in June! GSN will be packed with in-depth sports game reviews, behind-the-scenes looks, codes, strategy, feature articles with sports celebrity gamers, fantasy sports tips, the latest trends in sports cards, draft reports from the NFL and NBA, and everything else fresh and insightful in the world of sports, video games and PCs.

Joe Kidd can be reached for questions or comments at: rlee@metropolismedia.com

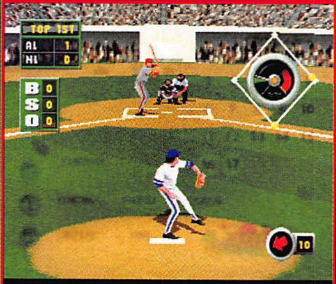
VIEWPOINTS



All Star Baseball '98
Acclaim

For those of us who have little patience for 3 hour baseball games, yet still yearn for the feel of a homerun yank, *ASB '98* is the game. Still has all of the major league names, great graphics and the whole nine yards, but it just moves along so much quicker than the traditional snail-paced sim. A pure scorer's game—forget the purist, this is action for lover's of good old-fashioned game-play. A great game for 1 or 2 players.

G	C	P	M	O	
8	9	9	5	8	89



GrandSlam Baseball
Virgin

I like the effort, but this one's just not for me. Why you ask? Simply because I may be the single, largest opponent of metered style action, which *GrandSlam* is relying heavily upon for user appeal. Overall load time for EVERYTHING gets old quick. *GSB* has its moments, but overall isn't anything to write home about. *GrandSlam* goes down swinging.

G	C	P	M	O	
7	8	8	7	8	78



Triple Play '98
Electronic Arts

If I had to choose one baseball game for my library, I would have to go with TP '98. This game looks and plays so good, I couldn't consider another. You could literally mistake this commentary team as a live broadcast, and a chimpanzee like me can actually learn something about baseball by their observations. This game is stacked from the detailed graphics to the actual ball-park sound effects, from the numerous options to the diversified stat categories. The Cadillac of baseball games.

G	C	P	M	O	
9	8	9	9	8	91

NBA ACTION 98







Here's the first look at what appears to be one of the best b-ball games to hit the Saturn. Sega has done a fantastic job with the graphics as you can see, and game-play looked enticing. We'll keep you posted!





GOAL LINE STAND!

QUARTERBACK CLUB '98



It look's like it's the start of something beautiful, as Acclaim busts through the hole and releases the first football game for the N64! Imagine over 400 polygons per player, 3D rendered stadiums, personalized play scripting, season-long statistical tracking in 9 different categories, over 1500 players on all 30 NFL teams, a Fantasy League mode where you draft your own team, and Mr. MVP Brett Favre as the playmaker! Strap on the chin straps!





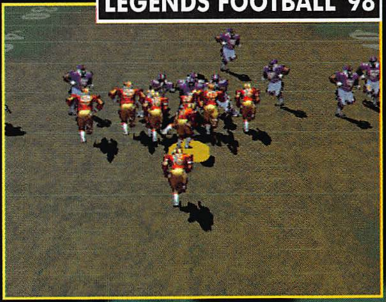








LEGENDS FOOTBALL '98



What do you get when you combine bone crushing modern day football, with 3 legendary eras of lace-up pigskin? You get *Legends '98*, a game built for the '90s that transcends through history. In addition to over 1100 licensed NFL/NFLPA players of today, you can also choose from teams available in '32, '50 and '68! What a cool idea! Don't let this antiquated approach fool you though, *Legends* is complete with every modern day option like customized play books and stat-tracking, career modes and multi-player action. Can't wait to see this one play!

NASCAR 98











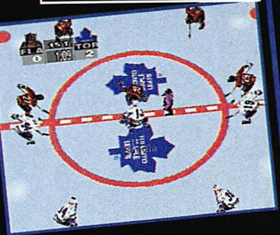
Gentlemen start your engines! Coming this September is the latest racing machine from EA, NASCAR '98. We're talking 24 of the field's top drivers like Jeff Gordon, Terry Labonte, Ricky Craven, Rusty Wallace, John Andretti and the rest of the lot. These drivers' participation in the game has created revolutionary AI, 3 different racing environments, pinpoint control, and unmatched physics. Each car has 24 independent textures, for crisp visual detail. This may be the most powerful racing game to hit the circuit yet. Stay tuned.

PREVIEWS

NHL POWERPLAY '98







What do you mean the season's over? No way baby, Virgin's keeping the steak alive by releasing the latest of their *Power Play* series this September. All you ratchuckers and octopus slingers can live it up all over again, with upgraded AI, on-the-fly 3-D environments, and motion captured animations. Of course, what would season play be without stat-tracking or creating and trading players? Time to hit the ice!

WORLD WIDE SOCCER '98



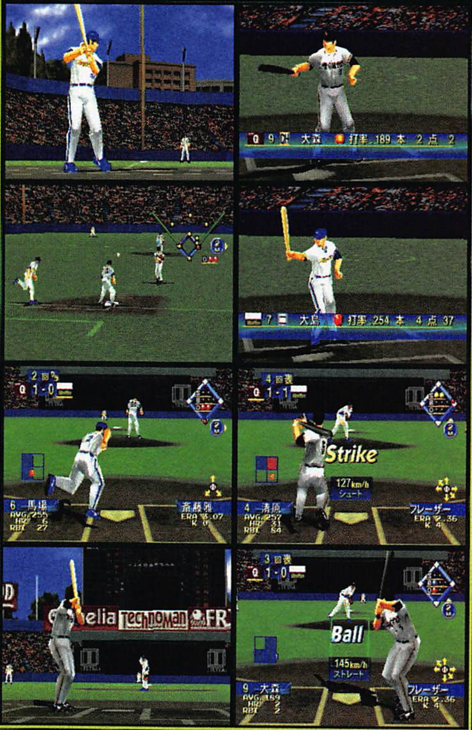




October marks the release date of Sega's highly anticipated *Worldwide Soccer '98*. Featuring Cobi Jones of the U.S. National team, *WS '98* goes even more global by including both Spanish and French Premier League play. Stat-tracking in over 30 categories keeps the purist satisfied, as well as the more advanced goalie AI, increased difficulty levels, and overall smoother gameplay. 3 new stadiums have been added to the repertoire, as well as instant replays, play-by-play announcing and color commentary. We'll have more soon!

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL '98 SEGA

Just in time for spring fever, *World Series '98* hits the batter's box. This arcade-style trend-setter is back, with new interleague play, MLB licensing on all 1997 schedules, teams and rosters. Select from any of the 30 ballparks including the Tropicana Dome, Bank One Ballpark, as well as the newly constructed Oakland Coliseum and Turner Field. Look to *WS '98* for the best in signature stances, swings and pitches. Sega's looking to take this one deep!



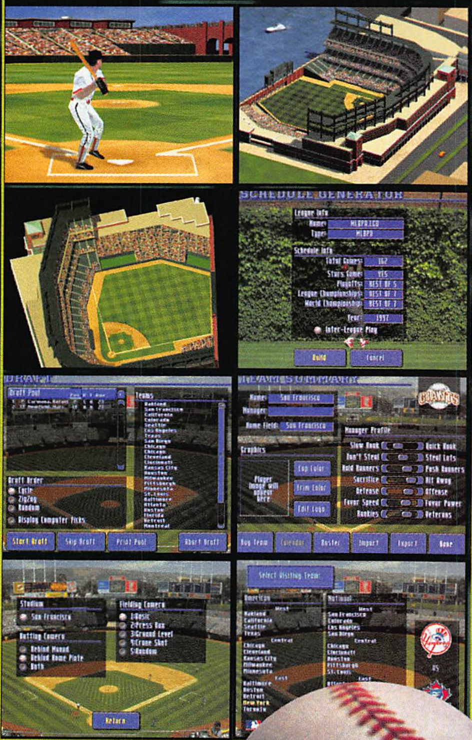


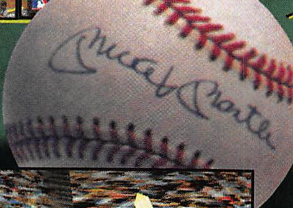
MLB '98 Sony

Select from one of 28 MLB teams in exhibition or season play. MLB '98 was created on an entirely 3D engine, capturing all polygonal players and real time rendering for a more realistic baseball experience. Sony went after a faster paced game, without losing the strategy involved. 5 unique camera options cover the action, and you can be sure tracking your statistics over the season will be included as well. This July release will be available exclusively on Sony's PlayStation platform.

HARDBALL 6 Accolade

The highly acclaimed *Hardball* series releases its latest 3D rendition with newly-implemented MLB and MLBPA licenses, a variety of player swings, batting stances and player size, an improved statistical model, create player, and modern as well as old-time stadiums. Other features include improved AI on trades, a Draft Mode, player awards at season's end, consecutive season play and career stat-tracking.

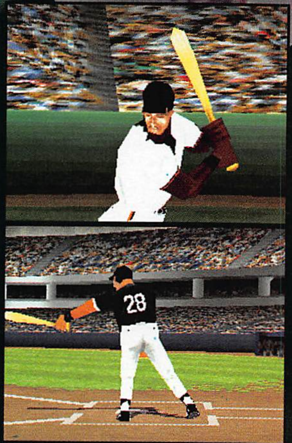




BOTTOM OF THE 9TH '97 / Konami



The early stages of this Konami title are extremely promising. The players' animations are some of the best I've seen, as batters even display their signature stances and swings. My first impression leads me to call this game the *In the Zone 2* of baseball. The reason I've come to this conclusion is due to the classic rotating camera found in *Zone*, which gives you plenty of quality close-ups, and a break from the traditional way of viewing the game. In addition, similarities are drawn in that this definitely is no sim, but rather a faster paced, arcade-style game along the lines of *All Star* and *World Series Baseball.* It appears AI will take a backseat to overall gameplay and graphics, which seems to be the start of a trend—moving toward appealing to more gamers rather than baseball enthusiasts. There are two options that set this game apart from the rest: Scenario mode, placing you in key moments of historical games, and the Practice mode, primarily found in Japanese made games, where you can develop your Pitching, Batting, Base Running, Offense and Defense. We'll let you know if *Bottom of the 9th '97* lives up to all of its high expectations.





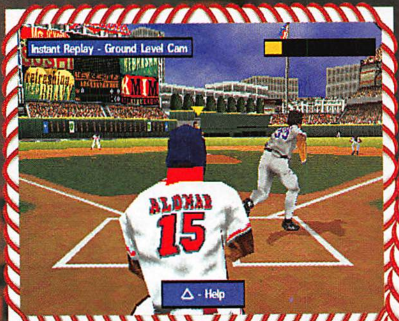


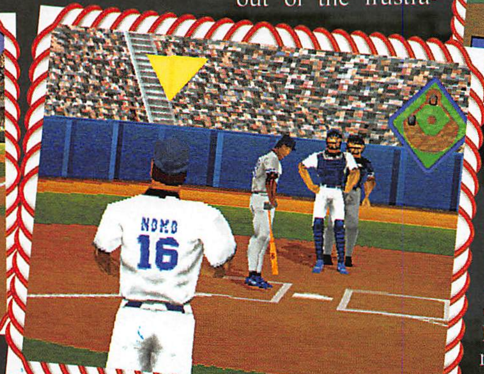
TRIPLE PLAY 98

On a weekly basis, sports fans clamor to ask me, "Just what is the best baseball game out there?" While this used to be a question I cringed at answering, similar to being asked, "Who did you vote for?", I can now say we've got a legitimate candidate to cast the ballot toward. *Triple Play '98* will get you out of your satiated seats, and drive you straight to the ballpark.

Why is this game better than any other baseball game? Because *TP '98* is complete in every aspect, it unleashes a flurry of attractions that stimulates all audio-visual game-playing senses. Graphically, *TP '98* uses an advanced real-time 3-D game engine. The players, all of which are actual, are Motion Captured and polygonal, and come complete with their signature stances, swings and pitches. The players' names on their jerseys (home, away and alternate) are clearer than ever before, making their resemblance that much more unmistakable. Truly amazing FMV stadium introductions and fly-bys of all 30 MLB stadiums, with actual stadium cheers, chants and national anthems. The audio environment is enhanced by intelligible yells from the crowd particular to the teams on the field, deep synthesized drumbeats, and authentic umpire calls. In *TP '98*, we are introduced to the first 2 Man Booth, Play by Play and Color Commentary, that is not only animated but, intelligent, thought provoking, informative and on time.







Some of the features and options include 1997 team rosters, inter-league play and trades, create player options, 6 different play modes, enhanced AI and baseball team strategy, stat-tracking with 3 times more stats, on-the-fly camera switching and baseball trivia while the game is loading! With 2 out of 3 categories covered in graphics and options, it is nearly a lock, but the game only gets better with the most important feature of all: gameplay. The play is calculated with precision timing and control is tight. Batting is facilitated by a floating cursor that follows the path of the ball, leaving it up to you to examine the route and determine the timing of the pitch. I actually had a fair amount of success in hitting, just enough to keep me out of the frustration zone and in the game. Pitching is controlled by you, from the selection of pitches to the path of the pitch. Ball physics are totally believable, and there are no exaggerations or voids in the flight action. Fielding is fun, as players' responses are quick and sharp, allowing you to attempt dives or even climb the walls for a take-away. Timing is accurate and sufficient enough to make the fielding fair yet quick enough to challenge. *TP 98* really has nailed the realism factor, and has attained a new plateau for baseball games. Even if you do nothing as a user, the infielders continue to fidget, the pitcher continues to loosen up and chants don't become stifled. This game is just one of those must play games, because it captures the entire experience; and doesn't skimp on you. No cheap seats here. ***JK***



GAMEFAN SPORTS



PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - EA

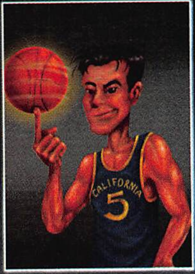
PUBLISHER - EA

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW

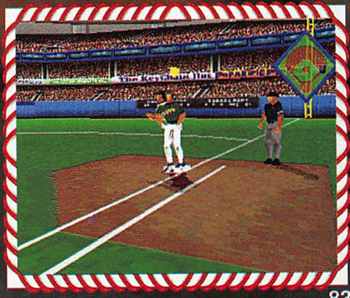


JOE KIDD
Like Iverson's name...
The answer.

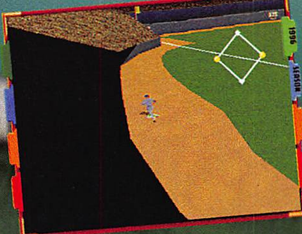
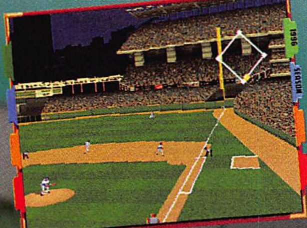








Grand Slam

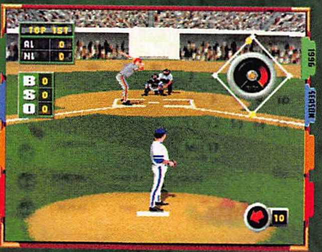




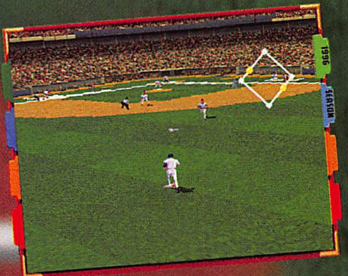
Baseball games are hitting the shelves everywhere these days, and right now Virgin is at bat with *GRAND SLAM*. Every once in awhile, when certain games run into patterns of redundancy, others try to separate themselves from the pack by doing something different. With *GS*, Virgin re-invents the wheel in quite a few ways, but when you change things in such a dramatic way you can either come out smelling like a rose or end up falling way behind.

Batting in *GS* includes the marriage of metered power hitting with cursored aiming. Now, I'm no believer in divorce, but I found the challenge of watching the power meter reach its peak while simultaneously trying to align the ball with the cursor a near impossibility. Of course, I'm notorious for being a below average batter to begin with, but one thing that just doesn't make sense is this: The meter takes a second to reach its maximum; conversely, you have to anticipate whether or not the pitch is going to be a ball or a strike. In no baseball game is the time between the pitch and the hit ever more than about 2 seconds, so in order to get full power on the hit, you almost have to assume you're going to swing at every ball! I didn't see any other way around it, and others seemed to have just as much difficulty as I did. Pitching unveils a completely different system as well, which is also meter-based. While the batting is the vertical meter (i.e. football kickoffs), the pitching is pendulum-based, like you find in most golf games. I've never been a fan of the 1-2-3 swing-o-meter, and kind of feel like the only thing it adds is frustration.

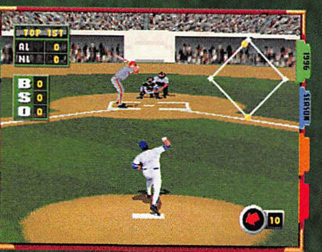



In theory the meter system is great and I can appreciate what *GS* is trying to do by incorporating more of the user's skill rather than just selecting a pitch and pushing a button — like most other baseball game. But for me at least the concept is impractical for pitching, since a metered system doesn't translate into any kind of real, applicable baseball talent — just a game within a game. Fielding? Well, the timing is all off. In most circumstances, no matter how big a jump you get on the ball, there is no way to catch the darn thing. I mean the ball drops into the outfield so quickly you couldn't reach it no matter how good your anticipation was! OK, I'm a terrible outfielder as well, but in all seriousness, I don't think it's as much a matter of skill as programming. However, you do have the option of shifting your infield and outfield to

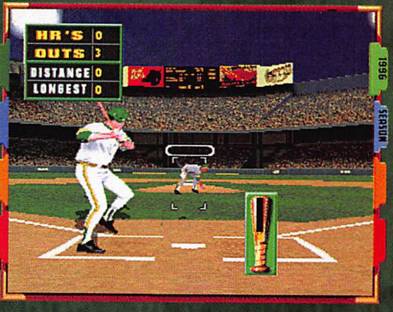
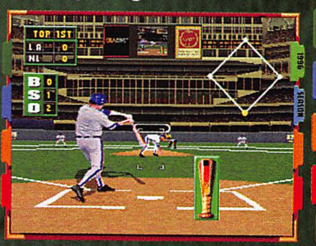





various positions and I'm sure this could help the matter somewhat. Alas, we do have the Practice Mode where you can work the bugs out of your batting, pitching and fielding too. Apparently I haven't spent enough time in this mode, but I know that I will have to invest quite a few hours before I'll ever be able to lay the wood on the ball.

Graphically speaking, I was impressed to see different stances, swings and waggle - even a batter blow a bubble from time to time. Different players also have different sizes which is great — Mark McGwire is a monster! The stadium graphics are a bit rough, nothing to get excited about, and unfortunately the commentary is repetitious and often untimely — definitely not on the fly. *GS* includes all 28 stadiums though, over 800 Major League (MLBPA) players, a Home Run Derby, Trades, Stat Tracking and more than 60 statistics throughout every mode except Practice. But even with all of the potential in this game, like they say in sports, "Let the other team beat you, don't beat yourself," and unfortunately even little things like excessive load time chips away at any excitement that may have been built up. If you like kicking field goals with a bat and hitting tee shots off of a pitcher's mound, this is your game. ***JK***


GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - VIRGIN

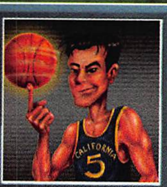
PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

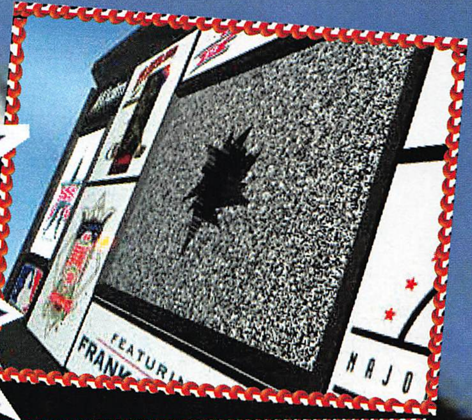
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - NOW



JOE KIDD AND IT'S A POP FLY TO CENTER-FIELD...









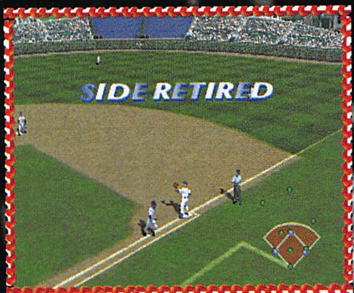






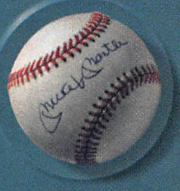








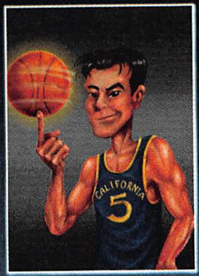
GAMEFAN SPORTS



REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM
PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW



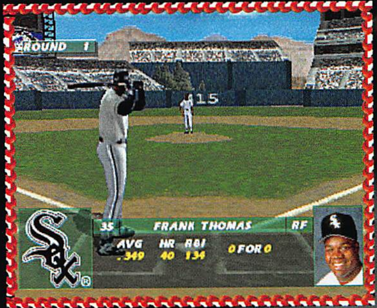
JOE KIDD
It's all about red hots...

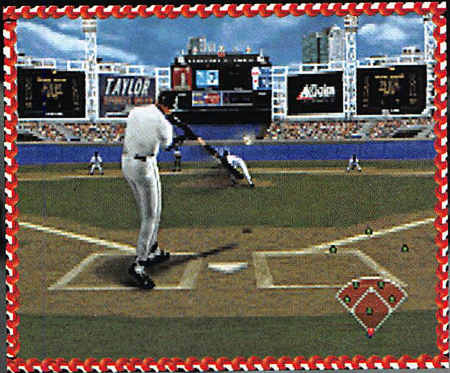
All-Star Baseball '97 brings new meaning to the term "fastball." In a world ever-growing with stat-laden sims, it's nice to balance things out with a sports game devoted exclusively to gameplay and graphics. I won't say that AI and realism are neglected, but let's just say they aren't the focus. While *All-Star* does have complete 1996 numbers from Stats, Inc., and has all 28 teams and stadiums including the Diamondbacks and Devil Rays, Major League licensing and all, the emphasis here is simply bringing some action to the baseball genre. It's never been so simple to put the bat on the ball, no crazy cross-hairs to line up with the ball, no wacky floating box within a bigger box, just flat out timing is all you need. Anyone familiar with trying to run the bases, but when you should be rounding 3rd to go home, he's actually backtracking to 2nd, while the guy from first is already camping there? Well how about simply pressing L1 to advance, and R1 to go back, rather than the D-pad, simultaneously with the base you're going to... or was it the base I'm on? Oh great... tagged out! It's history. Keeping in line with the rest of the game, pitching is very simplistic, with 4 different pitches to heat up, the X button to send it, and the d-pad for quick flight adjustments.

Graphics are more than sufficient. All 700 MLB players are Motion Captured animations of the Big Hurt. Effortless gameplay, and not a glitch to be found in the frame rate. Each stadium is 3D rendered, and have a high level of resemblance to the real sites.

Choose from 6 gameplay modes: Exhibition, Season, Playoffs, All-Star, Batting Practice and Home Run Derby. Tons of options in between, without a lot of load time to kill the anticipation, which makes this whole "movin' along" theme just fine by me. Possessing the award-winning play-by-play commentary of Jon Miller, provides the gamer with a sense of familiarity, since Miller in essence *is* the voice of baseball. The beauty of this game is that it doesn't try to do too much, but what it does do, is done quite successfully. No hang-ups, no errors, no oddities, just swingin' a bat and havin' fun doin' it. ***JK***







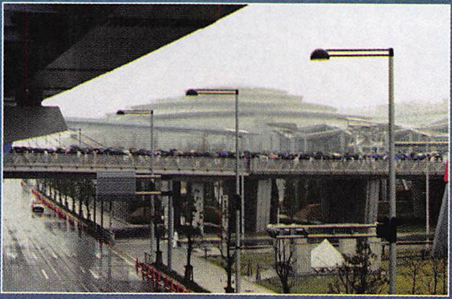
•JAPAN NOW SPECIAL REPORT•PART 1

TOKYO**GAME**SHOW

ONLY GAMEFAN CAN DELIVER THE LATEST AND HOTTEST NEWS FROM JAPAN, AND THIS IN-DEPTH REPORT ON THE TOKYO GAME SHOW, THE BIGGEST SOFTWARE EVENT THIS YEAR, IS NO EXCEPTION. GAMEFAN GOT A GLIMPSE OF THIS YEAR'S POTENTIAL BLOCKBUSTERS AND NOW IT'S YOUR CHANCE...

From April 4th to April 6th, The Computer Entertainment Software Association (CESA) once again hosted Japan's largest exhibition of computer games, the Tokyo Game Show. This twice-a-year event has replaced the Tokyo Toy Show as the place to go for being the first to play all the latest games, and to find out about the new releases.

This mammoth event was held at Japan's largest exhibition center, the Tokyo International Exhibition Hall (known as the "Tokyo Big Site"), which has been built on land reclaimed from Tokyo Bay. Just 30 minutes away from the center of Tokyo via the high-tech "Yurikamome" train, it's a lot more accessible than the Makuhari Messe, where all the arcade shows are held. Because of this, the attendance rate was much larger than normal. The high attendance was helped by the fact that this is one of the few shows that is specifically held for the general public, and the not game industry—so every day was jam packed with thousands of screaming kids!



EXPECTANT JAPANESE GAMERS LINE UP IN THE POURING RAIN TO CATCH THEIR FIRST LOOK AT THE NEXT WAVE OF VIDEO GAMING JOY!

This year there were 104 companies (up from last year's 87), packing into a combined 1,200 booths, exhibiting over 500 titles both new and old. Even though it rained all three days of the show, 120,000 gamers decided to brave the inclement weather and wait in line for hours (some without umbrellas), to make it the most successful game show ever.

CESA was founded by companies associated with the computer game industry in order to handle the maturing software entertainment industry. The focus is to undertake both investigation and research into computer entertainment software and publicity through exhibitions and seminars. Through this, the CESA hopes to contribute to the wholesome development of the software industry, not just in Japan but worldwide.

Besides all the usual stage events, talk shows and competitions that were held at each company's booth, there were also a number of special events that were held on each day of the Tokyo Game Show.

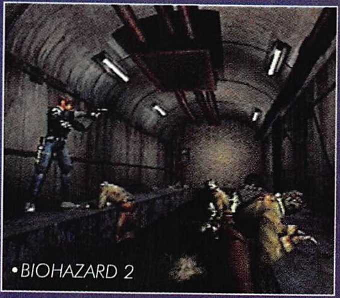
• TOKYO**GAME**SHOW • CAPCOM

SUPER ADVENTURE ROCKMAN • BIO HAZARD • BIOHAZARD 2 • BREATH OF FIRE III

Although Capcom had plenty of great games lined up at the show, one character in particular was grabbing all of the limelight. In celebration of *RockMan*'s 10th anniversary, Capcom's booth was designed around the theme of the history of *RockMan*, with games both new and old featured at the show. In addition, there was a special *RockMan* goods display, a history of *RockMan* video show, and even RockMan himself appeared on stage!

As well as the now-familiar *Rock-Man X4* and *Rockman Battle and Chase*, Capcom unveiled yet another new title for our metallic hero. *Super Adventure Rockman* is an adventure game that combines high quality animation with game action. The 90 minutes of completely original animation spans three different adventure plots where you can battle over 20 RockMan bosses (although not all at once).

Since Capcom's *Bio Hazard* press conference earlier this year, this was our first glimpse of how these games have been progressing. The Saturn version of *Bio Hazard* was finally in a playable condition, being around 50% complete. While it's still too early to know what new features will make it into the Saturn version, the graphics engine, though not as good as the PS version, was still very well done. *Biohazard 2* looked, for the most part, unchanged since its last showing. As only a video was running, Capcom wasn't giving anyone the opportunity to play it. They did highlight some of the main features of the game, however, and it was a decent showcase if nothing else.









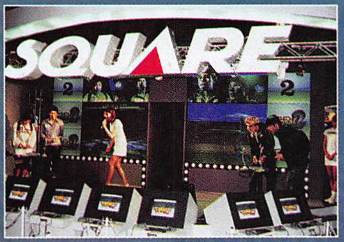
• CAPCOM**FOCUS** • BREATH OF FIRE III

Capcom, a name synonymous with great fighting and action titles, really isn't known for RPGs. Yet, one of the more popular RPG series introduced in the US by Square had Capcom origins, and it's making its first appearance on a 32-bit console.

All the information we have on *Breath of Fire III* is still very early. The storyline begins with the uncovering of a dragon's egg in a cave, which quickly hatches. When the miners try to move the baby dragon, the cage breaks and the animal falls into a forest. A short time later, a small naked baby with blue hair is found in the same forest by two woodland brothers, and is taken under their care. This character with blue hair (which we could conceivably guess is the baby dragon), just as in every *Breath of Fire*, is named Ryu.

BoF3 comes with spectacular texture mapped 3D polygons, which can be rotated in real time with a dynamic view-point camera. *BoF3* is unique not only in this "Pseudo-3D engine," but in its "No Interruption Battle System." Instead of having some psychedelic effect appear before each fight, *BoF3* has the enemies just swoop into whatever screen you're on.

FRONT MISSION ALTERNATIVE • FINAL FANTASY TACTICS • SAGA FRONTIER • BUSHIDO BLADE • TOBAL 2





Having the stage area half the size of their entire booth resulted in a fairly chaotic scene both in front of and inside Square's booth, as there were obviously far too many people there for Square to cope with. (Considering the success and popularity of their games one would have hoped that they could have afforded a bigger booth by now.) The queues for each game proceeded to stretch in all directions until one couldn't be sure just exactly which game you were in line for. This was a result of having to play four different games in order to get a special present.

Throughout the day, the main stage was dominated by *Bushido Blade* and *Tobal 2* events. In particular, Bun Bun Maru and Shinjuku Jackie, two of Japan's gaming elite, were on hand for the event. They hung out to give advice and tactics on how to play *Tobal 2*, as well as fighting a few matches themselves.

Their were six games on play at the show; *Bushido Blade*, *FF IV*, *Tobal 2*, which are all currently released, and the upcoming titles *FF Tactics* and *Saga Frontier* (which are still under development). The final game on display was *Power Stakes*, which was kept distinctly out of the way and wasn't really featured at all. A seventh title, a rather undistinguished *Derby Stallion* look-a-like, will be the first game on the Aques label.

• SQUARE**FOCUS** • FRONT MISSION ALTERNATIVE

Front Mission: Alternative is a real-time war simulation game set on the continent of African. Taking place at some point in the future, technology has advanced to a point where robot battle mechs have become a reality. Set slightly before the previous two *Front Mission* games, *FMA* has you control mechs called WAW's, as opposed to the previously used "Vancer" robots. There are two types of WAW: a robo WAW and a tank WAW. Unlike the Vancer, you can't change arm or leg parts with a WAW, although you can mount different weaponry on parts of your body.

The game is made up of over 30 missions, and in each mission you must correctly equip your WAW and check the mission zone and situation in that area. For example, in a case where you are required to capture an enemy installation, you first check the world map to find its location. Then, you zoom in to the local map, which uses a 3D topographical display to show relief, and marks all installations and major constructions. You can reach the target by either using the WAW tank or a special large size helicopter, which can carry your robo WAW directly to the operation zone.

Although most of shots revealed by Square show a rather barren desert, there is actually a wide variety of terrains. As the stage is Africa, not only must you act out campaigns in the desert, but also in jungles, swamps, beaches, desolate rock plains, cities and even a bay dock. Depending on the terrain and territory, the combat conditions will be different, so you'll need to both equip your WAW appropriately and consider your deployment strategies carefully, in order to operate effectively.





•FRONT MISSION ALTERNATIVE

Not only can you destroy the enemies' crafts and various buildings, but a wide variety of other objects as well. Even while casually walking down an empty street, you can open fire on the cars that lie abandoned to the side of road and send them bursting into flames. If they're close to a cliff edge, the force of the explosion can send them rolling over the side.

In the previous versions, you were able to alter all manner of your mech's parts. In FMA, however, this system has been simplified. As a regular member of the army, you receive all your WAW equipment and weapons from them. The better you perform in your missions (i.e. the higher your success rating), the better the quality of weapons and equipment you receive will be. A special set-up screen allows you to configure the weapon setup for each WAW individually, where you can allocate different weapons to various parts of your body. For those who don't want to bother with this, there is an auto-setup mode available as well.

Your WAW are equipped with a variety of weaponry. For example, one of the robo WAW "back position" weapons is the rocket launcher. As the launcher normally faces upwards, you'll need to alter your WAW's stance to fire it. By moving your legs apart, and lowering your arms, the launcher on your back rises upwards to face forwards, enabling you to fire. This takes some time to do, so in intense battle situations you may consider putting the other WAW into supportive roles to cover the WAW using the rocket launcher. Needless to say, *FMA* requires quite a level of thought!

CESA **GAME** AWARDS

For the months leading up to the Tokyo Game Show, most of the mainstream computer game magazines ran special features on this event. Included was a voting form, so that readers could choose their nominations for each award category. The results represent the best game software produced and sold in Japan. Just like the movies, all the top game producers in Japan were seated around tables in front of the main stage, awaiting the results. When the results were announced, the winner walked up on stage and collected his award. As you might expect, on the next day all the winners had their awards sitting at the front of their booth so that everyone could see them.

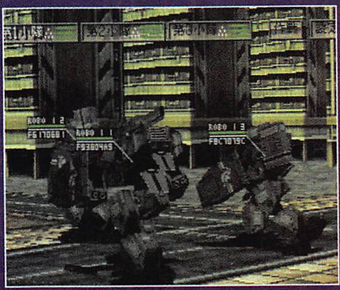
The results are as follows (note that while the Sega Saturn cleans up in the game development awards, they have little success in the game category awards):

Game Category Awards

Puzzle: *Puyo Puyo* (Compile, PSX)
Adventure: *Bio Hazard* (Capcom, PSX)
Fighting: *Tekken 2* (Namco, PSX)
Education: *Lifescape* (Mediaquest, PSX)
Compilation: *Namco Museum Series* (Namco, PSX)
Action: *Super Mario 64* (Nintendo, Nintendo 64)
Racing: *Mario Kart 64* (Nintendo, Nintendo 64)
RPG: Super Famicom *Dragon Quest III* (Enix, SFC)
Simulation: *Derby Stallion '96* (ASCII, SFC)
Board: *Happy* (Hudson, SFC)
Sports: *Decathelete* (Sega, Saturn)
Shooting: *Virtua Cop 2* (Sega, Saturn)

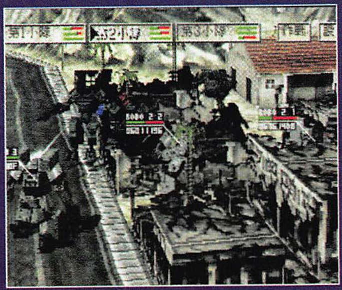
Game Development Awards

Direction: *Sakura Wars* (Sega, Saturn)
Programming: *NiGHTS* (Sega, Saturn)
Graphics: *NiGHTS* (Sega, Saturn)
Main Character: *Sakura Wars* (Sega, Saturn)
Sub Character: *Sakura Wars* (Sega, Saturn)
Scenario: *Bio Hazard* (Capcom, PSX)
Sound: *Parappa the Rapper* (SCE, PSX)
New Concept: *Parappa the Rapper* (SCE, PSX)









• TOKYO**GAME**SHOW • **KONAMI**

METAL GEAR SOLID • GOEMON 5 • POITER'S POINT • CASTLEVANIA 3D • OTHER LIFE, AZURE DREAMS

In recent years, Konami's strength has greatly increased both in the arcade and home console areas. At the AOU Expo, Konami showed a strong line up of games and demonstrated the power of their new Cobra board. At the Tokyo Game Show, Konami demonstrated that they have the know-how to develop games for all formats (something Capcom has yet to do) with a major line-up of games on the PS, SS and N64. They also announced several new games for Windows '95.

Konami's booth was very well designed, having a nice, open feel to it. Making use of both the inside and outside of the area they had been allotted, there were never those long endless lines to play any particular game (Square could take some notes!). However, two areas of mad panic were the *Tokimeki Memorial* original goods shop and the line to get the free video of the Konami game lineup. These were probably the longest of the lines at the show.

The most popular games at the show, not surprisingly, were *Tokimeki Memorial*, both a puzzle game and an adventure game (they were the only games at Konami's booth which you had to wait any length of time to play). Although already released, *Dracula X* was very popular at the show. It was actually played more often than some of Konami's newer titles, such as *Pointer's Point, Another Life Azure World* and *Midnight Run 2*. All of Konami's N64 titles released up to now were there, as well as the first playable version of *Goemon 5*. The special show version allowed you to either explore around in the typical normal mode or fight a 3D boss. Although having been in development for some time, it is obvious that Konami is having some difficulty with the 3D engine for *Goemon*. Attempts to explore areas off the beaten track would frequently confuse the game to the extent that the character would get "stuck" by some poor collision detection, at which point the display would break up.

Amongst their other games on offer were *Salamander Deluxe Pack Plus* (a collection of 3 classics), *Parowars* (a 4-player simulation game using the *Parodius* characters to battle each other), *Real Powerful Pro Baseball '97* (N64 port) and *World Soccer Winning Eleven '97*.

Konami did make two big announcements: They are working on a new RPG based on the *Twin Bee* characters, and they are going to enhance the Sega Saturn version of *Genso Suikoden* (their popular PS RPG) so that it will contain new features never before seen, making it a 120% version! No playable demos or video was show for either title, however.






• KONAMI**FOCUS** • METAL GEAR SOLID • *GAMEFAN GAME OF THE SHOW!*

Unlike other action games, where the objective is just to shoot as many enemies as you can before you die, *Metal Gear Solid* requires a lot more brain power and quick thinking. Rather than running in with guns blazing, you're better off using stealth and cunning like a ninja spy. Stealth ranges from sneaking up behind an enemy, to hiding inside some boxes as guards pass by. Konami has put a lot of time and thought into the stealth aspects of the game, and a smart gamer will make use of their work. Almost anything is possible! An empty truck makes a perfect hiding place when the alarm has been raised, and while crossing the overhead walkways, crawl along on your belly to avoid being seen.

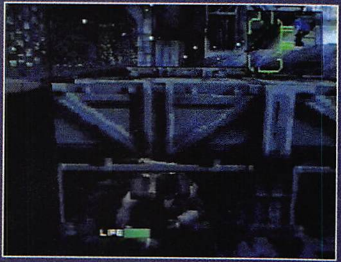
In order to maintain this level of stealth, you'll need to effectively use the three types of views available: (1) Normal Mode: You can look around from any viewpoint. This view is useful for viewing areas hidden from your character. By altering the viewpoint, you can discover unseen items or find guards hidden in the area. (2) Subject Mode: You can look at yourself from ground level and close up but you can't change the camera's view point. (this is the standard view chosen by the computer.) (3) Interlude Mode: You can see from the player's perspective, and as you turn left and right the viewpoint changes accordingly. Useful for close up examination of objects and other tasks.



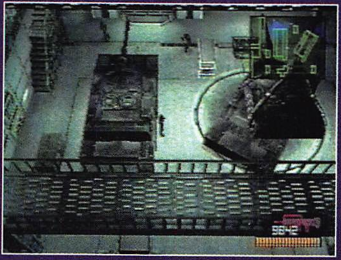
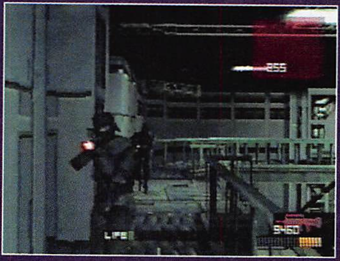
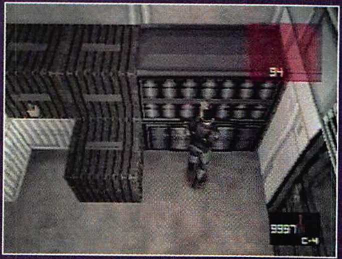
With these 3 modes you can not only see front, behind, left, and right but also above and below as well. By utilizing these capabilities you'll be able to select the best route through the locations where your missions take place.

All the stages have been designed with an incredible level of realistic detail. Buildings and surroundings aren't just background scenery: It has all been designed for a specific purpose. An example of this would be an innocent-looking grill plate on a wall that can be removed to reveal an air duct, through which you can crawl to reach other rooms.

The weapons found in the game can all be used, and they act like their real-life counterpart would. The development team used military gun catalogs from America to help them in their research and in June they plan to go to America to actually fire some of them as well. One example of this realism is depicted in the grenades. Even after you've pulled the safety pin out of the grenade you can still keep moving about until you throw it.





NAMCO • SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT • SONY MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT • CLIMAX • WARP • UEP • ENIX •

With several coin-up cabinets on display, Namco was intent on focusing on *Tekken 3*. Strangely, however, they made no major announcements concerning its PlayStation debut.

Ace Combat 2 and *Time Crisis* have progressed from the PlayStation Expo versions shown last November, but there were no major changes. Their only new games on offer were *Gun Bullet*, a shooting game that makes use of Namco's gun, and *Tales of Destiny*.

UEP certainly had the coolest looking booth at the show with a great stand design and a huge snowman floating overhead. *CoolBoarders 2: Killing Session* features a 2-player mode and an 8-'boarder versus mode with new and improved courses.

Climax's Ken Naito, the creator of such classics as *LandStalker* and *Dark Savior*, was insistent on making a distinction between other driving games and their latest project *Runabout*. This title is an action driving game. The gameplay and style needed to win will be far different than standard racing games. *Runabout* takes place in the streets of ordinary cities, and because of this, the cast of vehicles is a wide assortment of 'everyday' fare, from buses, to trucks, to even things like scooters. Since the race takes place in the middle of a city, there isn't just one correct way to get from start to finish. Players can dodge and weave along different paths, down streets, through alleyways, across people's lawns, through buildings, all in the attempt to find the best, and quickest path to the goal. And, just like in a real city, there will be police around, ready to try and stop any show-off drivers.

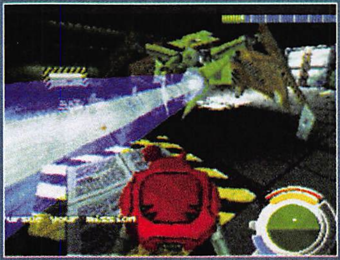
While the game is still being worked on, even at this point the graphics are rather exceptional, with everything from the cars themselves to the backgrounds being nicely detailed and crafted. This looks to be a very exciting game, and should do a lot to set new standards for racing games.

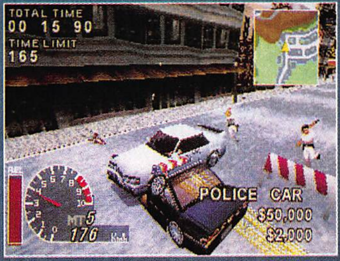
Trust Warp! Their entire stand didn't have a single game on it. Instead, it was designed to look like a cherry blossom orchard with huge cherry trees, pink blossoms laying all around the stand. A large number of women dressed in kimonos were offering visitors the chance to eat traditional Japanese food. While resting on mats underneath the trees, enjoying their food, visitors were entertained by live performers playing traditional Japanese music (it is spring, after all). At one point, Mr. Kenji Eno even played the piano live on stage! He also had a talk show with Yu Suzuki.

SNK was showing a new video of *Samurai Shodown 64*. This one includes more real CG game action showing the characters fighting each other. In one scene a character is hit so violently that he is smashed through the wall behind him, where he falls down to the ground outside the building.

Sony Computer Entertainment had their usual impressive presence, as one would expect. A broad range of software for various tastes was on display along with plenty of stage events centered around game challenges. Proving that you can't keep a good character down, *Parappa the Rapper* and *Crash Bandicoot* were back again live on stage for some comical antics. Although Crash didn't get to win any CESA awards, he challenged Parappa to a game of *I.Q.* (*Intelligent Qube*), and he wasn't going to be beaten by Parappa on this game! Despite the Game Show rivalry, anyone who has been following the careers of these two famous show-biz personalities would be able to tell you that they are in fact the best of friends. Recent TV and magazine commercials have shown them dining out together on a regular basis... they even share the same bedroom! Could it be that SCE is trying to build these characters up to mega stardom to rival the likes of Mario and Sonic?

Besides *Alundra* and *Beldeselva War Chronicles*, which have already been released, SCE had two new games that are coming soon. *Go For It Morikawa Kun No. 2* is another AI-orientated, 'bring up a lifeform'-type game that is currently all the rage in Japan. *Morikawa* is a robot, which makes for a bit of change. *Baby Universe* is not so much a game, but like *Depth* is really an amusing graphical front end to some music software. However, this time you can put your own music CD into the PS while it's playing.





GHOST IN THE SHELL AND RUNABOUT. TWO HOT TITLES ON THE WAY FOR THE SONY PLAYSTATION THIS YEAR. EXPECT MORE DETAILS SOON.

After the amazing *Kowloon's Gate* booth at the PS Expo, Sony Music Entertainment was a little more down to earth for the Tokyo Game Show. Back at the expo, their new RPG, *Lagunakyulu*, was looking very good indeed.

Lagunakyulu is constructed from fully texture mapped polygons so that all the items, characters and scenery can be rotated in real time to be seen from any direction. All this is done very smoothly, the character animation was all motion captured, and there is a lot of detail on all the objects. One of the main features of *Lagunakyulu* is the Memory-card Battle System (MBS). The MBS lets you save your characters to the memory card so that you can take it to your friend's machine and then download them onto his system. By doing this, you can swap characters and build up a stronger party.

SME's latest game is *Dam Dam Stompland*, a fighting game with a difference. *Stompland* is a strange place where jumping makes a sort of 'Dam!' noise. Jumping is the key to this game, as only by jumping on your opponent's shadow can you defeat them. Each time you jump on their shadow, your opponent gets bigger, and so does their shadow (making it easier to jump on their shadow again). Due to the terrain and light sourcing, the size of your shadow alters, and therein lies the strategy of the game: making sure that your shadow is as small as possible while your opponent's shadow remains large.

AERO GAUGE FROM ASCII WAS A SURPRISE N64 RACING GAME ON SHOW FOR THE FIRST TIME. FULL REPORT IN THE NEXT ISSUE.





CREATOR'S **CONFERENCE**

On the second day of the show, there were two talk shows by famous Japanese game creators. To emphasize the freedom of their point of view, no mention was made of the companies they worked for—they were there only as independent developers.

The Future of Games:

This show talked about what kind of games we may see in the future and how games are evolving. The creators of some of the most original and ground-breaking games were there:

Eno (Warp): *"I'm not going to make any more interactive movie games. I don't like sequels."*

Aquanaut creator (Aqua): *"I'd like to make games where saving data was essential. That's why the 64DD is the most suitable."*

Game Dreams

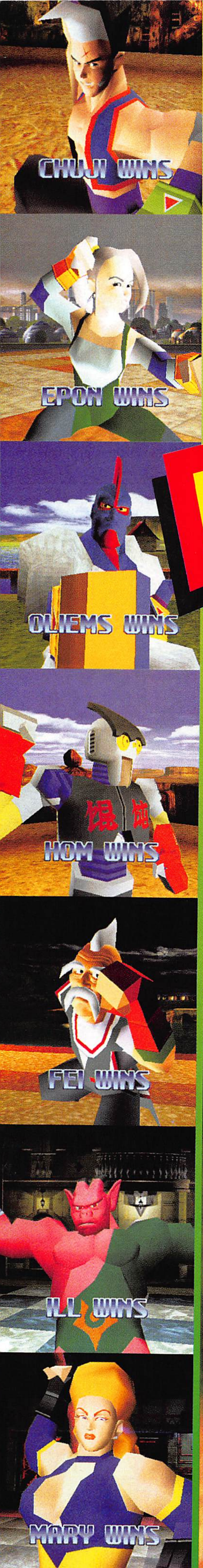
The top creators in the game industry talked about the dreams they had for their games and the future of gaming in general. This was the most talked about show in the Japanese press, especially concerning attendees Yu Suzuki (Virtua Fighter Series) and Shigeru Miyamoto (Mario). Yoshiki Okamoto (Street Fighter Series) and Kouichi Nakamura from Chun Soft were also present.

Suzuki: "I don't want to do Virtua Fighter 4 until I really feel like doing it. It probably won't start for a year. I want to make something different from Virtua Fighter. I can't announce anything now but we are planning one big project.

Miyamoto: "We plan to release the 64DD in Autumn. By then we'll have games that you'll be able to play on it. The cartridge version of Zelda is also scheduled for Autumn."

• TOKYO**GAME**SHOW • **PART 2 NEXT ISSUE...**

WE CONTINUE OUR REPORT WITH REVEALING LOOKS AT SEGA'S HOT NEW TITLES FOR THE SEGA SATURN. YUJI NAKA SPEAKS ABOUT PROJECT SONIC, TEAM ANDROMEDA REVEALS PANZER RPG AND GD NET UNVEILED...

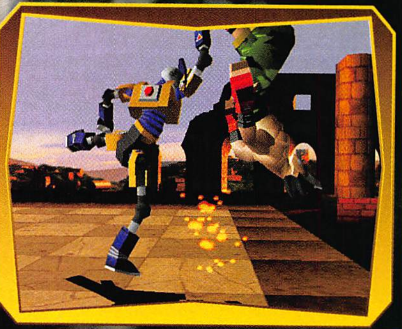


GAMEFAN LAST-MINUTE UPDATE!!

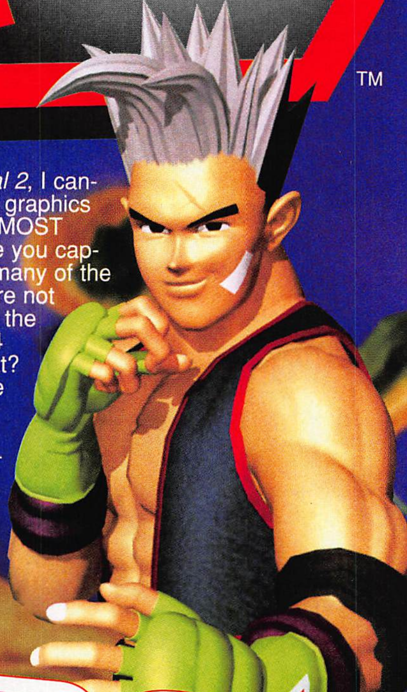


TOBAL 2™

No sequel should improve this much on its predecessor. It's just not right. How can Square and Dream Factory ever hope to make a *Tobal 3*? From the short time I've played *Tobal 2*, I cannot think of any of its areas that could be drastically improved. We've got the best graphics ever on PlayStation, ultra-refined gameplay, a mini game that isn't so mini, and ALMOST TWO-HUNDRED PLAYABLE CHARACTERS. 200!! That's just wrong! Each time you capture an enemy from Quest Mode, you are awarded the ability to choose it. While many of the monsters share moves with each other, nearly all are different in some way—they're not just palette swaps. Of course none have the number of moves or depth of the main 14 characters, but how could one expect that?



Unfortunately, since we've only had the game for a couple of days, I can only tell you about the most obvious changes to the gameplay. First is the addition of projectiles, which take your life to use but deal absolutely insane damage—charge a fireball for half your bar and you can kill an opponent in one hit. Also, they can't be blocked... Clearly it will take a while to discover the true implications of fireballs in *Tobal*. Second is the Just Frame Combo System, which takes the



ALMOST 200 PLAYABLE CHARACTERS!











"connect-the-dots" combo mentality to the next level by giving you about 8/60 of a second to input each successive command correctly... thus hindering button-mashing flangemasters. Luckily, the game's extensive training mode will show you exactly when to press the button, and you can even slow down the action to learn timing! The third obvious change in *Tobal* is the severe crippling of back dashes; if you dash back too much, you'll stumble, and if you're hit ONCE in a backdash you are left groggy, ready for a beating. I'll reserve my opinions of these new features until next month, when I'll review *Tobal 2*.

Something I CAN comment on now is the graphics. They're simply unbelievable. *Tobal 2* retains the high-res display and 60fps action of the original but adds gorgeous gouraud shading and much more texture-mapping. The trade-off is a fairly substantial loss of polygonal objects in the backgrounds, but it's more than worth it. *Tobal 2* has created a new standard to judge home system graphics by—if you saw this game in an arcade you'd be very impressed.



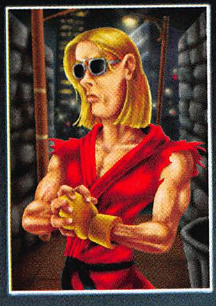
Tobal 2's music is good, but very, very different from the original's. *Tobal No.1*'s composer, Yasunori Mitsuda, was not in charge of *Tobal 2*—instead, a newcomer to Square named Takayuki Nakamura did the tunes. (One could speculate that Yasunori wasn't available because he's doing *Chrono Trigger* 2... please, let it be true!)

Well, that's about all I can tell you based on a very short time with the game, I'm running out of space, and I've only told you about a fraction of *Tobal 2*'s hardcore new options! (*T2* has a mode in which you can change the character's colors and save them to memory card... I've wanted this feature in a fighting game forever!) We'll be back next issue with a review and a report on the three new characters: Chaco Yutani, Doctor V, and Mark, so come back next month! **NR**

P PREVIEW

PlayStation

- DEVELOPER - DREAM FACTORY
- PUBLISHER - SQUARE
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 2
- DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE
- AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

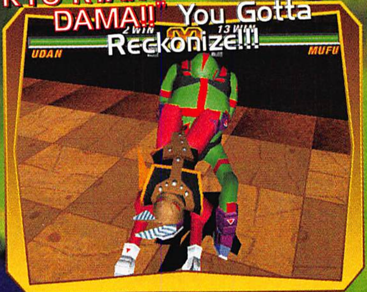


NICK ROX
Square has *way* too much power.

THE NEW PROJECTILES ROCK!!



FEEL THE RAW POWER OF DOCTOR V'S "SURGICAL WAIKOO PHOTON" AND FEI-PUSU'S "SHIPPU DOTO SHOMO KYUKYOKU FUUN RAIJIN KOKU GEKI KYU RYAKU SHITE KURO-DAMA!!" You Gotta Reckonize!!!



THE ALL-NEW AND IMPROVED QUEST MODE



The Quest Mode is possibly the most-improved aspect of *Tobal 2*. Whereas before you were confined to claustrophobic dungeons, you now have the freedom to roam across a huge world, equip Molmoran stones that raise various attributes, buy items in shops, save your game, and converse with townspeople. The Quest Mode is no longer a bonus feature... it's an entire game in itself.



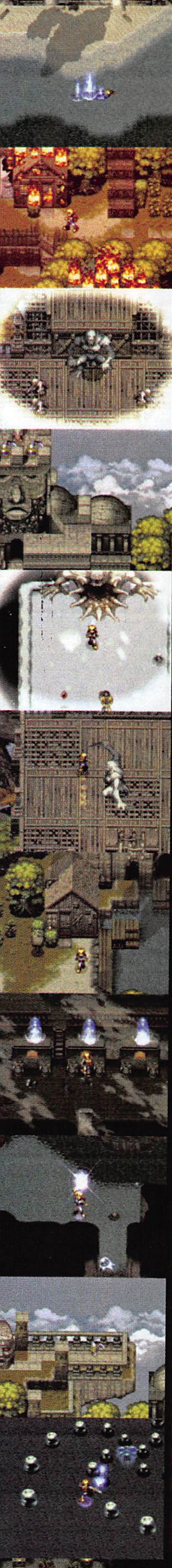




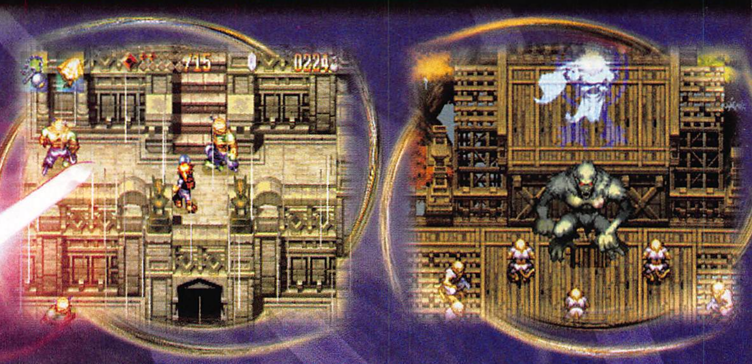














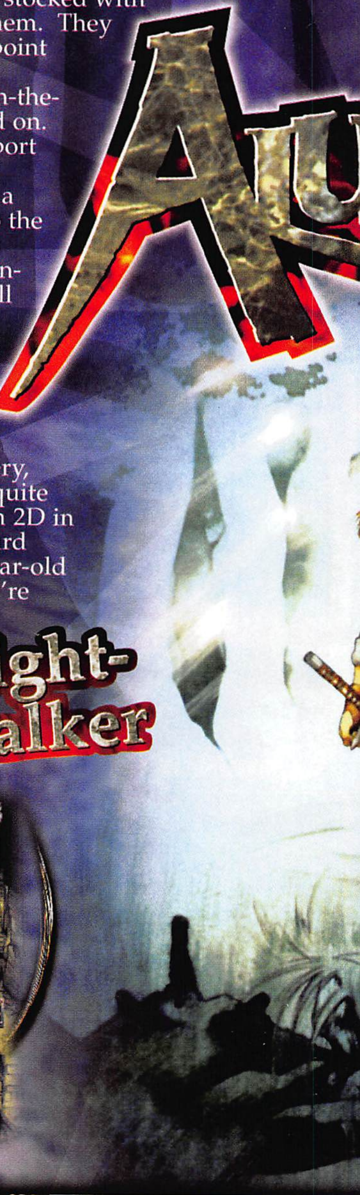
It's been a long time since I played a game like *Alundra*. So long, in fact, that I had forgotten how much fun a well-designed, traditional action RPG was. Sure, we just recently had *Thor/Legend of Oasis*, but that game was WAY too heavy on aggravating, repetitive puzzles and the story was spread far too thin for me. *Alundra* has its share of maddening puzzles, but it has a much nicer feel, far better graphics, and... um... let's just say its soundtrack is *slightly* superior.

The pre-story borrows heavily from *Ys*: You play as a young adventurer who doesn't speak a single word throughout the course of the game and, as the tale begins, travels to a faraway land via boat. After arriving in a town called Enoah, he gradually comes to discover that more and more of the townspeople are suffering from terrible nightmares. In a dream, he is visited by a mysterious being called Ra, who tells him that he is one of the Elna, a race that can enter dreams. The young man, named Alundra, soon realizes that he must take advantage of his power as a dream-walker and save the populace from their nightmares.

Alundra has a strange gameplay balance—the action parts are fairly easy: you can carry an abundance of healing items and few of the bosses are difficult. The aspect of the game which earned it a difficulty rating of "porno" is the puzzles... this game's stocked with a never-ending supply of them. They range from riddles, to pin-point jumps, to lever-pushing, to *Adventures of Lolo*-style push-the-blocks... the list goes on and on. And, unfortunately, the import version of *Alundra* is nearly impossible to beat if you're a non-Japanese reader, due to the vast amount of tasks that require knowledge of the language: riddles, signs that tell you what to do next, and villagers that have essential information ("Go put these flowers on such-and-such grave," etc.) are in abundance.

Alundra's graphics are very, very good— although not quite the pinnacle of hand-drawn 2D in an overhead RPG (that award still has to go to the two-year-old *Magic Knight Rayearth*) they're more than

Save the villagers from their night-mares as Alundra the dream-walker





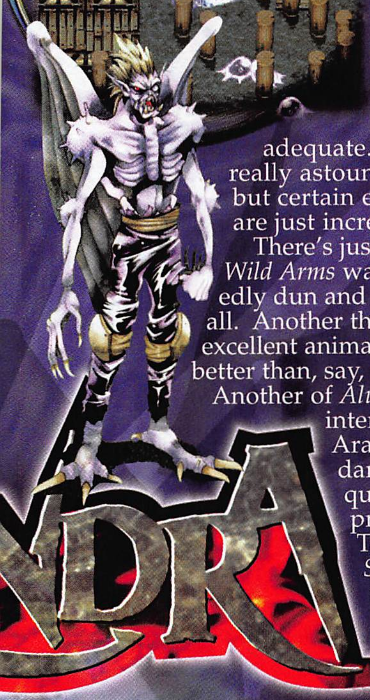












adequate. The really astounding scenes are few and far between, but certain effects, like when Alundra uses magic, are just incredible.

There's just one small graphical problem: Just as *Wild Arms* was solidly *brown*, Alundra's color scheme is decidedly dun and pea-soup green. Ah well—you can't have it all. Another thing you won't get in *Alundra*, unfortunately, is excellent animation—very few on-screen characters animate better than, say, the last generation of Square's SFC RPGs.

Another of *Alundra*'s many high points is the music—an interesting blend of several music themes, like Arabian-flavored, ethnic motifs and the standard, heroic, booming symphonic stuff. The quality of the music should come as no surprise—it's by veteran anime musician Kohei Tanaka, also the man behind the music of *Sakura Taisen*. A couple of the sound effects also please me greatly: The altogether fun "K-SHING!" you get when you pick up life crystals motivates me to seek them out even if my HP is max.

Since this is only a preview, (and because I haven't beat it yet) I'll reserve my final judgment on *Alundra*. But I can already say that it's probably the best action RPG since... wow, there haven't been many recently, have there... um... well, let's just say it's damn fine—truly what I'd expect from the main development team of the original *LandStalker*. *Alundra*'s slated to come out in America, but it doesn't yet have a release date. We'll keep you posted. ***ER***









P PREVIEW

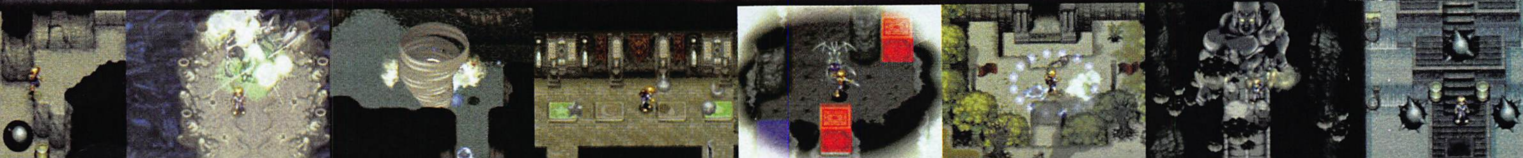
PlayStation

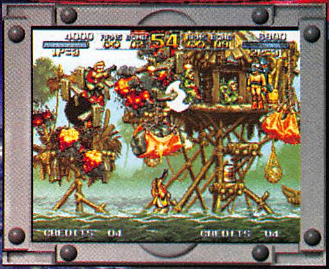
- DEVELOPER - MATRIX
- PUBLISHER - SCEJ
- FORMAT - CD
- # OF PLAYERS - 1
- DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED
- AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN



EVIL ROX





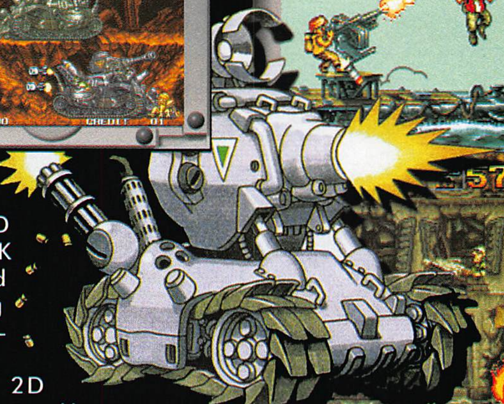












Metal Slug has the rare distinction of being one of the few decent Neo•Geo games that's not a 2D beat-'em-up. It was a surprise hit for SNK when they released it back in '95, and now, thanks to the miracle of SNK's 8 meg memory cartridge, it's set to make a similar impact on the Saturn.

Metal Slug is an old school 2D platform/shooter in the tradition of *Gunstar Heroes* or *Contra*. You and friend must blast your way through six levels of intense side scrolling action, utilizing weapon power-ups and even tanks to pop some serious caps in the collective ass of the enemy, all in the name of patriotism.

So what makes *Metal Slug* so special? Well, let me put it this way: if *Cyberbots* is 2D insanity (and it is), *Metal Slug* is the 2D lunatic asylum where *Cyberbots* is making a full recovery. You have NEVER seen 2D this insane at home. The attention to detail is just staggering. From the humorous character animation, to the intricate backgrounds, to the sheer volume of sprites on-screen, *Metal Slug* is truly a thing of beauty. Admittedly there is occasional

BLAST AWAY AND GO, GO, GO!

slow-down when things get really busy, but there was slow-down in the original, and to be honest it comes as more of a relief than a hindrance.

Gameplay wise, although *Metal Slug* isn't doing anything new, what it does it does well. The game has a few control issues (no diagonal shooting and no jumping down through platforms) but good players will find a way to work around these limitations. The action is fast and furious and the vast number of unique level sections gives the game a strong replay value. It harkens back to the halcyon days of 16-bitwhen a game was so fun you'd actually play through it more than once (gasp!).

At present, there's little chance of *Metal Slug* ever making it to these shores. It requires the memory cart to run, and Sega has no plans to release it over here at the moment (arrrgh!). But if, like me, you shop import and are looking for a decent 2D action/platformer to tide you over till *Silhouette Mirage*, then your prayers have just been answered. Go kick some ass, marine!

METAL SLUG
メタルスラッグ

Developer: Nazca
Publisher: SNK
Released: Mar. '97
RAM CART



EXPLOSIVE FUN!!









IRON CAVALRYMEN IN HELL

KNIGHTMARE'S GUIDE TO GAME CHANGES



UNITED STATES

JAPAN

....Since the dawn of the electronic entertainment industry there have been fundamental differences between the Japanese and American gaming scenes. Most of these differences are culture related and merely reflect the tastes of the society in question (e.g. certain genres appealing more to certain countries). Japan likes horse racing simulations. America likes *MK*. Japan likes anime art. America likes Boris Vallejo. Go figure. This in turn has an effect on the range of games that get released, and in that respect, Japan has the edge on us. Sure, we get most of the 'major' titles developed in Japan, but at the same time dozens of lower profile, but equally wonderful, gems go unnoticed every month.

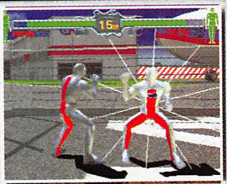
However, the differences between the Japanese and American gaming scenes can be observed at a more intrinsic level—namely, in the games themselves. Normally these differences are limited to language translation and packaging issues, but occasionally they can be a little more significant than that. Here's a list of some 32-bit changes you may find interesting.

THE GAMES	SYSTEM	VERSION	REASON TO BUY
FIGHTING VIPERS		JAPANESE	Secret character, Pepsiman, removed from American version. The Pepsiman theme alone is worth the price.
X-MEN: COTA		JAPANESE	Boss character Juggernaut playable in Japanese version through code. Removed from American version.
SEGA RALLY		JAPANESE	Improved clipping, extra options, mountain background added to hairpin turn on Forest course.
VIRTUA FIGHTER		U.S.	Polygon glitching lessened.
VIRTUA COP 1&2		JAPANESE	Cool-ass O.G. cap-busting black gun instead of America's sad day-glo red one.
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE		JAPANESE	Different item placement and improved control/camera in *Doom* sections, possibly more music!
MARIO 64		U.S.	Graphical and camera glitches fixed; more sound effects and more voice - particularly in the intro and ending.
RESIDENT EVIL		JAPANESE	Un-censored cut scenes,vocals on end-game song,and Capcom's original difficulty settings (Jill gets more ammo, etc.).
BRAHMA FORCE		U.S.	More enemies on earlier levels and improved enemy AI.
WIPEOUT		U.K.	US and JAPANESE versions missing cool music tracks by Orbital, Leftfield and Chemical Brothers.
SAMURAI SHOWDOWN III		U.S.	More animation frames added; control tweaked and smoother gameplay.
PERSONA		JAPANESE	The Snow Queen quest (a cool sub-quest) was removed from US version.

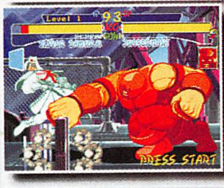








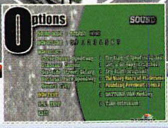




Japanese Daytona CE features better clipping, new textures, a cable-link mode, Net Link compatibility.







Japanese



American



refined CPU AI, handling closer to the coin-op, night time and evening driving and the original B-UNIV tunes!

E. STORM'S IMPORT UPDATE



Taito's 60fps polygonal fighter has made the leap from coin-op to PS and is currently on the streets in Japan. Heavily lit environments and three selectable fighting styles per character highlight the action. We'll have a review in the July issue.



MagicalHoppers





It's Pandemonium, Japanese style! This burning SS actioner features new lead characters as well as animation in place of the CG that lived inside the US version. As a collector's piece or simply because you prefer the more manga style players, Magical Hoppers/Pandemonium is one of the best Saturn action games you'll find.

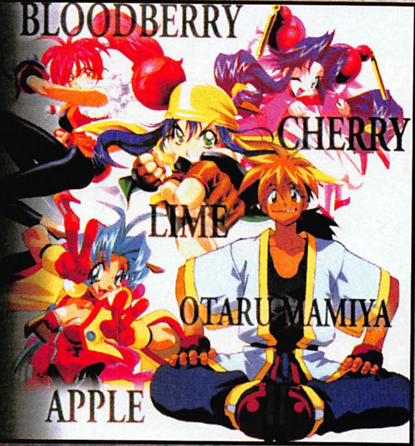


BATTLE SABERS





Already an amazing anime begging for a US release, *Saber Marionette* (with character designs by Tsukasa Kotobuki of *Toshinden* fame), has already spawned a game overseas. Looks like a hyper-cutey, super-exaggerated poly fighter, huh? Well, it is. There's not much here in the way of depth but for pure anime-style fighting action, complete with the option to expand certain body parts (feet and hands come to mind) *Battle Sabers* is a whimsical time-killer that any anime fan is sure to appreciate.





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THE KING OF IRON FIST TOURNAMENT 3...

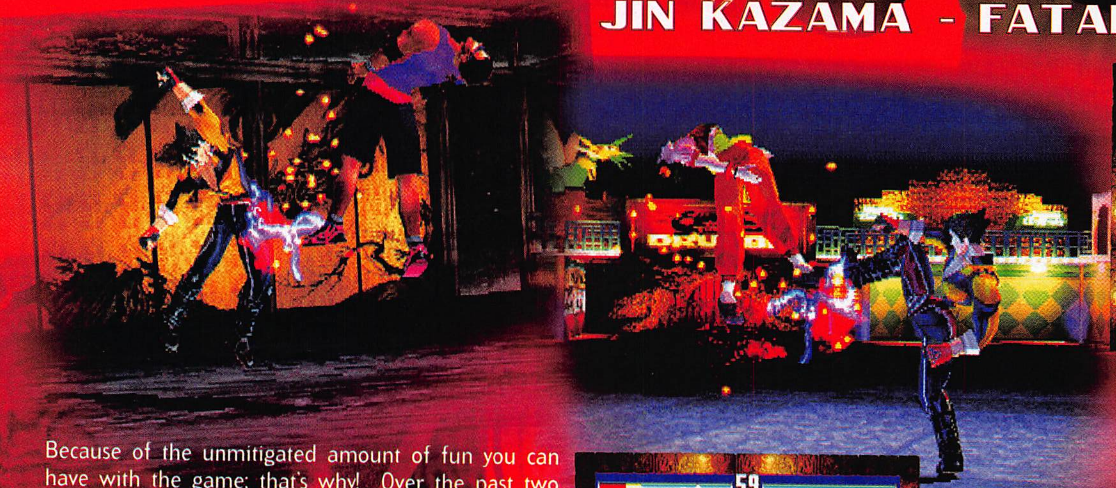




The arcade version of *Tekken 3* has been munching quarters at an insane rate over the past few months, and quite rightly so: it offers a new standard of 3D gaming which (in technical terms at least) propels this polygon punch fest to the next level of combat. So why are we getting so worked up about a game which at first glance looks to be nothing more than a prettier version of *Tekken 2*?

I Have mastered the art and shall defeat the God of Fight!

JIN KAZAMA - FATAL LIGHTNING





Because of the unmitigated amount of fun you can have with the game: that's why! Over the past two weeks the GameFan crew has been subjected to non-stop bouts of Iron Fisting to see just how much Tekken 3 differs from it's predecessor, and whether the game will be able to make it to the PlayStation intact. Read on to find out more...

The first aspect you'll notice is the host of new gameplay features that further heightens the already insane amount of strategy in Tekken 2. As well as the previous game's 'default' moves, the third Rave War offers characters who can Power Charge themselves in mid-combat: hit all four buttons simultaneously and your fighter quakes in luminous light which adds extra strength to their next sequence of attacks (lasting for the next four seconds or so) and even causes blocking opponents to wince. Also new is the Reversal Counter: when a fighter punches a foe and the foe reverses it into a grapple, this grapple can now



EDDY, HWOARANG, XIAOYU ALL-NEW MASTERS OF FIGHTING!









be countered into a lightly damaging third move distancing you from danger and causing any enemy mass confusion.

And these new techniques are only the beginning of the fun! There's Side Throws for every competitor (Hwoarang's neck snap using his foot is a personal favorite of mine) and actual side-stepping into or out of the screen. These dodging antics are one of the best features of all: turning *Tekken* into a truly 3D experience! Add to this an immediate ground recovery (no more waiting in a furious rage for some cheap shake-out queen to pound your prone form!), and for those of a more laid-back nature, each prone fighter has an ankle-strike whilst on the floor: a small but effective way of stopping that extra energy loss. Finally, every Rave Warster has their own countering technique–from Paul's crunching counters to Law's simple parrying that pushes back–and this too, is a blessing that rounds out *Tekken 3* superbly.

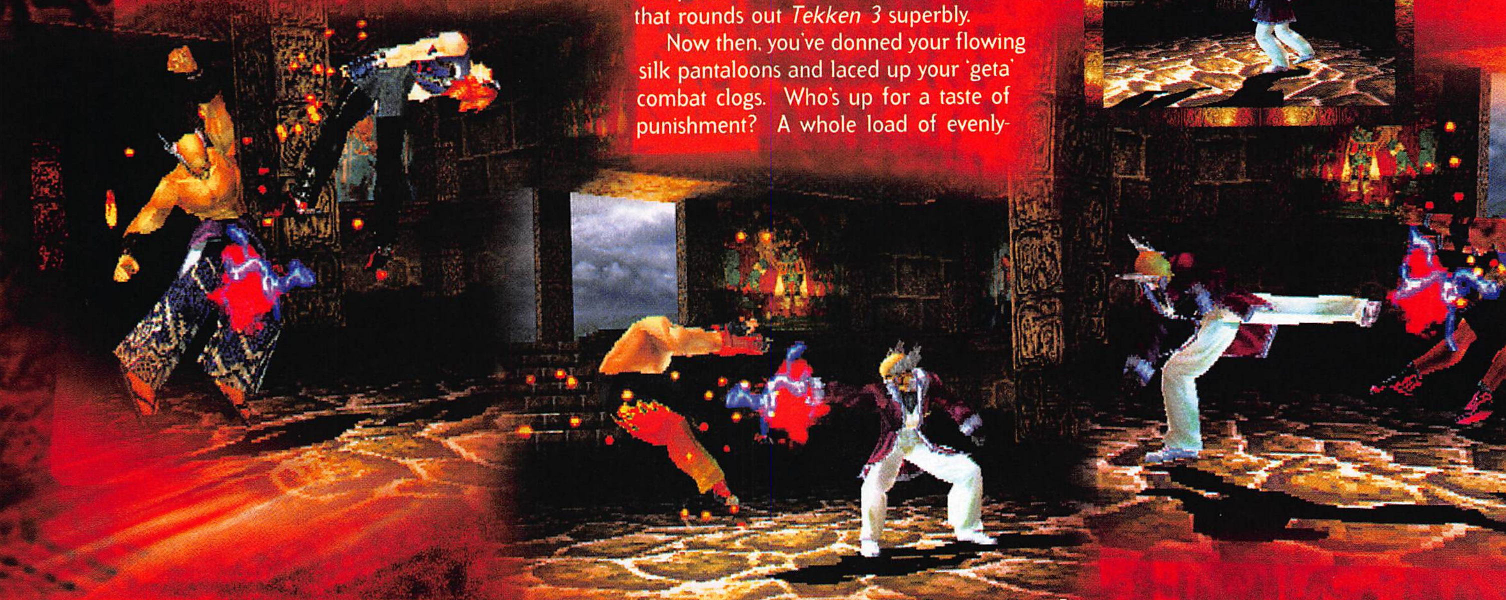








Now then, you've donned your flowing silk pantaloons and laced up your 'geta' combat clogs. Who's up for a taste of punishment? A whole load of evenly-



If I can control this great power then the world shall be mine!

HEIHACHI MISHIMA - THE TRUE KING OF IRON FIST

balanced and highly tweaked characters, that's who! First up is the pixie with attitude, Ling Xiaoyu, a 16-year old Panda nanny utilizing the Bagua Fist technique with unconventional stances and a great use of the 3D plane with cartwheels and Jun-inspired short-range (and low strength) but lightning fast moves. Also present is Yoshimitsu, the demonic space ninja with a combination Suicide spin (!), more 'helicopter' action, flip spins, a power sword slice of ultimate power, inexcusable bad breath and a throat grab which sucks the very life out of you and restores his own! Also watch for his side throw where he splits into two apparitions and deals some major double pummeling!



There's Nina ('Sarah Bryant' plotline) Williams, aikido assassin and part-time family voyeur, up to her old tricks with a couple of groin-connecting kicks, side-step double palm thrust and a load of slaps learned from her sister. We're hearing great things about her new multi-hit combo... Next to inadvertently enter the Rave War is Forrest Law (the son of the infamous Marshall), who has obviously trained hard with his dad, as he's proficient in all Marshall's moves, plus more of his own. A fantastic new throw (Law shakes with rage afterwards!), rushing punch combos, three exciting costumes and that all-important one-inch punch make this gent the best Bruce Lee impersonator since Dragon from *World Heroes*...



Hwoarang is Baek's prized pupil and with good reason: He's spectacularly fast to watch and play. All of his throws are awesome to









behold (especially his neck breaking kick [KERUNCH!!]) and painful for the victim. He's got four different standing stances and different moves for each of them. He also has few punch techniques, so employ legwork with this taekwondo killing machine! Also worthy of note is Hwoarang's motion-capture; perhaps some of the most impressive ever seen in a video game... until you meet Eddy Gordo. Eddy's a capoeira freak who uses both dancing and heavy hits to rain damage down on a foe. Eddy must simply be seen to be believed; his unorthodox style of play and supreme reach make him one of the most powerful characters of this tournament.





Next is Paul Phoenix, determined to become the Rave War champion... again. For a third time. Come on Grandpa, give it up! You're nearly 50, and you've only learned half a dozen new techniques over the last 15 years! I tell you, when we get 'round to *Tekken 7, Revenge of Heihachi's Great Grandson* they'll be rolling Phoenix out in a wheelchair and crutches! "C'mon you young whippersnappers! I trained under Willie Williams y'know!" If you must, try his new floating elbow, unimpressive side throws or combo off his backstep. But however, always go for his fourth victory stance; pure gangster style! Moving on, Lei Wulong obviously did some major training for this competition; he's increased his knowledge of the animal Shaolin martial arts to include five species and the infamous drunken stance (Lei is said to have gained the audience of an old white-haired bald gent on a raft for that technique), and these stances can be switched to during and after some moves. Great fun to play and always unpredictable.



The new and improved (yet slightly portly) King is back (once an urchin from the original King's orphanage), and this time he's in spandex! Nice! The grapple-fests available to expert King players just aren't even funny anymore—he's got bone-popping wrenches from every conceivable angle. Particular favorites are the groin bite and that One Double Mexican, as well as a new multi-part throw. Countering kicks is also a Godsend, and the Irish Whip (another





System 12 power has created the ultimate in the Tekken series!
NEW CHARACTERS, NEW TECHNIQUES AND NEW BOSSES...









swinging move) that can start a whole series of spectacular barraging attacks. Finally comes Jin Kazama, the son of Kazuya and Jun. As you'd expect, he's learned fighting techniques from both sides of the family (Heihachi taught him... Mishima style!) and powerful punches combine with hook-punch combos, an electrical forcefield and Jun's four hit floating kick combo. Definitely the fighter to start your *Tekken 3* career with.



Graphically, *Tekken 3* throws more polygons around at a faster rate than *Tekken 2*, with 3D backgrounds that don't gel together quite as well as those of *Virtua Fighter 3*. However, this System 12 hardware does mean a PlayStation port is scheduled (provisionally for February 1998) that'll be more or less perfect. I'm expecting the backdrops to be 2D. Other than that, it's business as usual with the addition of extra sparks to impact hits, close-ups of damaging hits and a more hardcore soundtrack (more akin to *Ridge Racer* and excellent to listen to—the arranged version is something to get very excited about!). What really shines through though is the motion capture: perfect repli-







cations of differing fighting styles have been programmed into this game, and this coupled with polygon-envelope technology (no glitching polygon necks when the characters look down) make for exciting visuals and the most impressive 3D outside of AM and Konami headquarters.





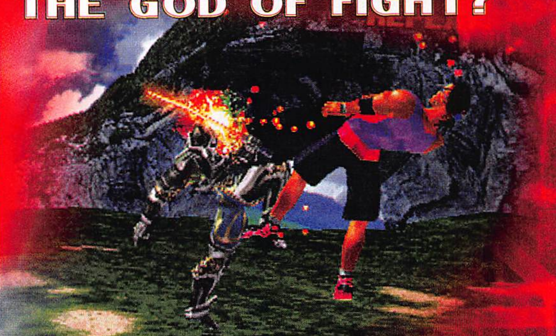
Old and new fighters of the strong soul...

HAVE THEY THE STRENGTH TO DEFEAT THE GOD OF FIGHT?



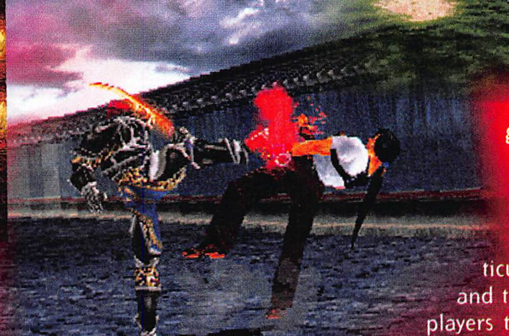






Of course, there's those secret characters to find, and as you'd expect, *Tekken 3* doesn't disappoint. Sources say there's eight time-released and three ultra secret characters waiting to be found. Among these are Kuma (apparently, the 2P version is a Panda!), Brian Fury, a Bruce clone (let's hope so!) and Julia Chang (Michelle's sister). And finally, it wouldn't be *Tekken* without the old Pantaloon king himself: Heihachi Mishima. With almost no hair at all, this sprightly 76 year old challenges you to a bout or two (and looks strangely like Vincent Price in the character select screens) before he gives way to the real god of fighting: a giant fighter named Ogre who has techniques from Bruce, Jun, Jack and many others. A truly frightening foe! What really scared us was when Ogre melds with Heihachi to create a horrific demonic beast (essentially the same Ogre with a phenomenal fire attack). A fitting final boss to the third chapter in the Iron Fist competition.





So *Tekken 3* is here, and I'm generally very impressed with the whole affair. Aside from some minor graphical glitching (ground warping and scenery disappearances particularly on Hwoarang's stage), and the tendency for some tedious players to simply low right kick their CPU opponent into defeat, this is one of the most exciting 3D fighting titles out there in arcade land. Now I must go. Until the PlayStation version... **The Chiefster**









AnimeFan



アニメファン

The year... 2000. A cataclysmic meteoric collision occurs, melting the polar ice cap and thrusting coastal cities under water. Massive environmental damage ensues, and thousands of animal species die. Fully half of the Earth's lifeforms are killed, including humans. This disaster is dubbed the Second Impact.

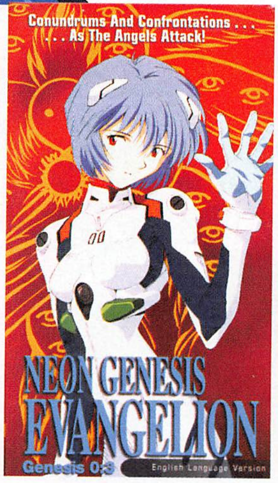
Fifteen years later... a mysterious being known as the Third Angel (In the original Japanese version of *Evangelion*, the Angels were called Shito, or 'Apostle,' but Gainax and AD Vision have chosen to rename these messengers) arrives from outer space. The Earth's most powerful weaponry is scrambled against it, but they are useless against the Angel's Absolute Terror Field. The only weapons on the planet that can penetrate these "A.T. Fields" are Evangelions, giant biomechanical weapons constructed by a mysterious agency known as NERV.

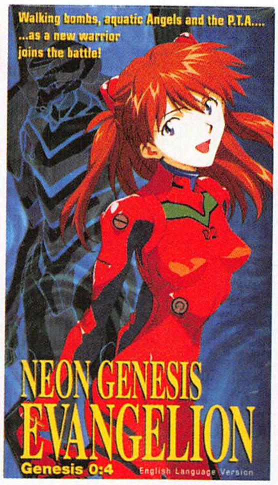
Even with these high-tech weapons at their command, the odds are stacked against mankind: Only 14-year-olds born directly after the Second Impact can pilot the Evangelions...

If you've never seen *Evangelion*, you're probably scoffing at the fact that we're giving such a generic-sounding anime an "A+." You may even scoff after seeing the first few episodes, but rest assured, *Evangelion* turns into the best anime on the planet after *Genesis 0:4*. The human drama and incredibly controversial subject matter in the later episodes of Eva will truly break you... but, unfortunately, you're going to be waiting a while for them, if A.D. Vision keeps up their current erratic release schedule.

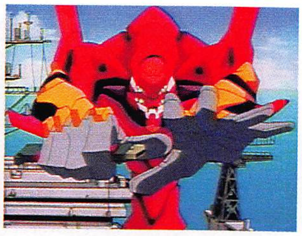
As godlike as *Evangelion* is, it's not without its problems. The story is riddled with minor loopholes, and the last two episodes are... well, let's just say they're not what they should have been. The controversy over these is so widespread in Japan that Gainax has decided to re-do them in two formats: OAVs that stick closely to the originals in terms of plot, and a two-part theatrical version. The first installment of the "true" movie ending, *Death and Rebirth*, was released in Japan in March, and the followup, *The End of Evangelion*, is due in the Summer. There's no word yet on whether A.D. Vision is going to bring these out in the U.S., but it's safe to assume that they will. Here's hoping that your Synchro Ratio with *Neon Genesis Evangelion* exceeds 100%!

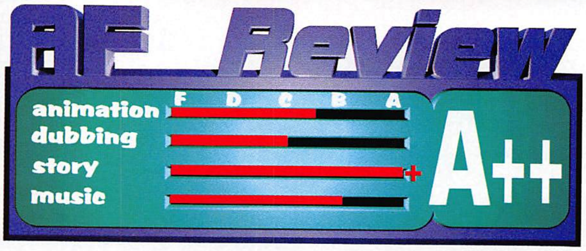


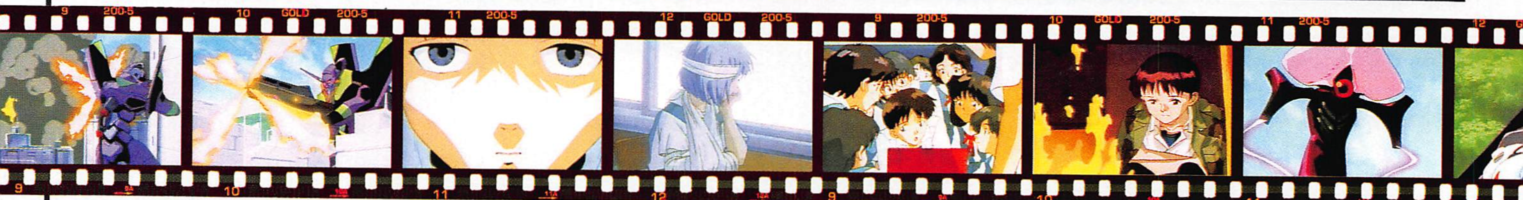






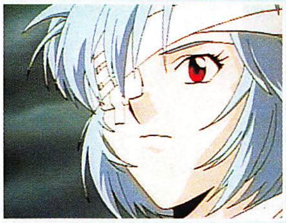




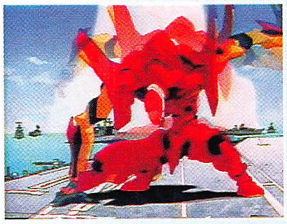




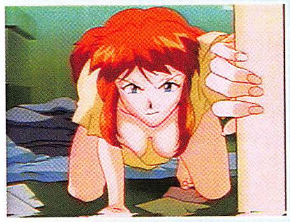


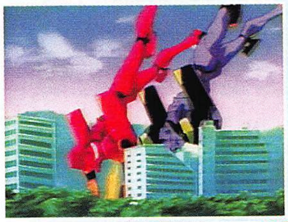




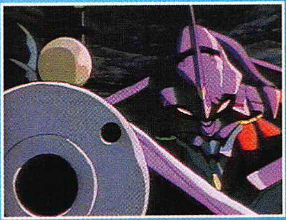






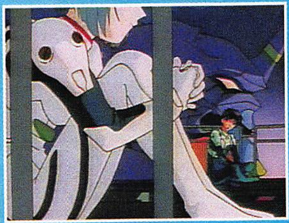


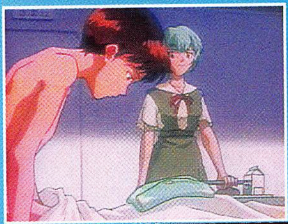






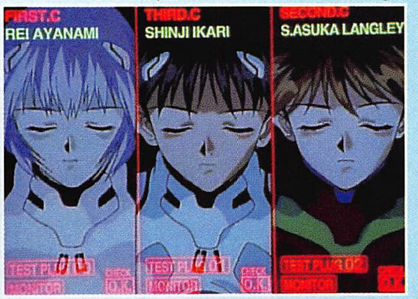






Neon Genesis Evangelion Genesis 0:2

Genesis 0:2 contains the episodes *"The Telephone Which Doesn't Ring/A Transfer"* and *"Rain, Escape, and Afterwards/Hedgehog's Dilemma."* In this volume we are introduced to Shinji's new Tokyo-3 middle school and meet his schoolmates: Osaka-ben-spouting Toji Suzuhara and his sidekick Kensuke Aida, a military freak. Suddenly, the Fourth Angel attacks and Shinji's schoolmates are caught in the skirmish. After defeating the Angel with only his Prog-Knife and with literally zero battery life to spare, Shinji no longer wants to pilot Eva and runs away. After being gone for two days, he meets Kensuke, who is camping, but is captured by NERV. He decides to return home. As he prepares to board the train back to his grandparents, Misato rushes to the platform...



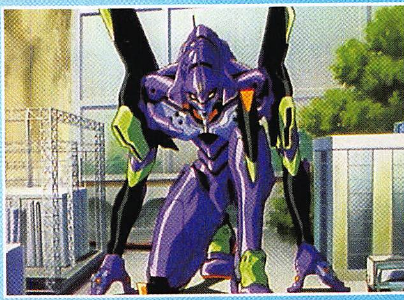
Neon Genesis Evangelion Genesis 0:3

Genesis 0:3 contains the episodes *Rei, Beyond Her Heart/Rei I* and *Showdown in Tokyo-3/Rei II*. In this volume we flash back to before Shinji arrived in Tokyo-3, when Rei's Evangelion Unit-00 went berserk during its activation test. Using his bare hands, Shinji's father, Gendo Ikari, opens Unit-00's superheated Entry Plug to save Rei. Upon seeing Rei conversing pleasantly with his father later, Shinji is at a loss as what to think. His own relationship with his father is very poor, and Gendo is treating Rei almost like a... daughter.

Just then, the Fifth Angel attacks, ripping a violent blast into Eva-01's breastplate! Shinji survives, and Unit One is repaired. This Angel's AT Field is extremely strong, so Misato surmises that the only way to defeat it will be to draw all the electricity from Japan and concentrate it into a single shot that will be fired by Shinji, with Rei in Unit Zero providing backup. This plan is dubbed "Operation Yashima." At precisely midnight the operation begins, with only six minutes to spare. The first shot misses! Just as the Angel prepares to fire another beam into Unit-01, Rei in Unit-00 raises her shield to protect Shinji. However, the shield is rapidly melting...

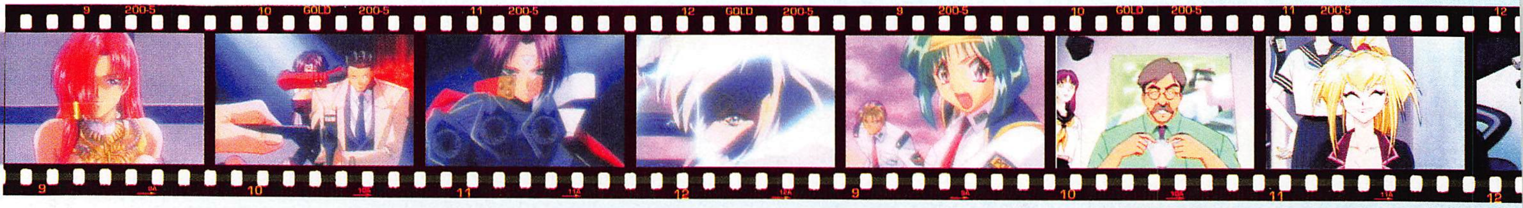
Neon Genesis Evangelion Genesis 0:4

Genesis 0:4 contains the episodes *A Human Work* and *Asuka Strikes!* In this volume, we're introduced to the unmanned anti-Angel robot Jet Alone. At its debut, however, it goes berserk, and there is a strong possibility of nuclear meltdown. Misato and Shinji succeed in stopping Jet Alone, but it appears that someone, perhaps at NERV, had tampered with the robot. In the second episode we meet the Second Child, the three-quarters German, one-quarter Japanese Asuka Langley Sohryu. Shinji and Asuka, along with a UN fleet, make short work of the latest Angel that appears. A quick note on the dubbing of this series: It's generally OK, but Shinji's whiny voice really annoys, and Asuka is just AWFUL. We really don't need such stereotypical Germanisms as "Mein Gött!" "Achtung!" and "Wünderbar!" peppered in with Asuka's speech. It's just annoying and wrong. I feel that the dubbing of *Evangelion* changes the whole feel of the series; one good example occurs in Episode 8: Gendo informs Kaji that he must escape by himself if worse comes to worst. In the American version he says, "Of course I can!" in a "I-think-I'm-really-cool" sort of way, whereas in the Japanese version, he says "I understand," simply accepting an order. Also, NOBODY can try and be Megumi Hayashibara. If you can hang with sub-titles, PLEASE view the subbed version.









After one of the most memorable opening scenarios ever seen (smooth animation and plenty of bounce for the buck, if you know what I mean), welcome to *Burn Up W*, one of the kookiest animes you'll ever lay eyes on. Beautiful babes, gargantuan breasts, and general wackiness rules the day as the Warrior Team springs into action, thwarting crime in a way, well, in a way you've probably never imagined.

What drew me to the *Burn Up* series was the art. The entire series is drawn beautifully, and even when the animation lacks, the art saves the day where others fall flat. If you're into luscious anime babes, *Burn Up* delivers, priority service.

If it's high drama you're after though, enjoy the package photos and grab the next selection, because *Burn Up* gets so bubbly at times it's borderline embarrassing. Rio for instance, when overwhelmed with shopping debts, resorts to selling her used underwear. Peculiar? I think so.

The actual cases however are quite intriguing, as is Warrior Team's method of dealing with them, as they shed their earthly clothes to reveal cyber-like authority. These transformations are, shall we say, for mature audiences. The fights themselves are fast and fluid and always a welcome sight.

In episode three, Warrior Team springs into action against terrorists commanding a lethal virtual drug and surprisingly a dramatic moment occurs as Rio's close friend is murdered point-blank by a fellow officer who's fallen victim to the drug. Three ends right there on a cliff hanger as Rio snaps completely and goes ballistic against insurmountable odds.

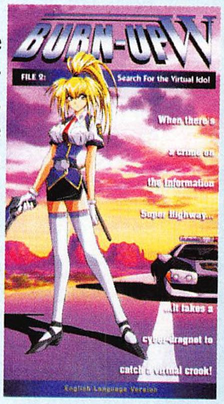
If things continue down this road of actual dramatic substance, complementing the excellent visuals, *Burn Up* will surely earn a spot as one of my favorite OAV's. Episode 4 is due out this June; we'll just have to wait and see.





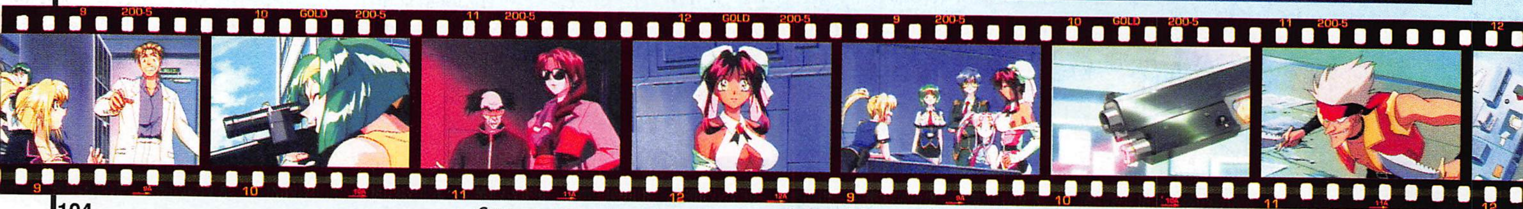


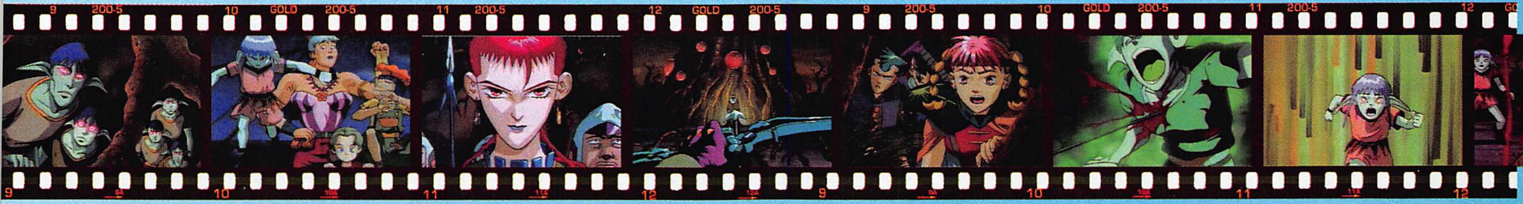






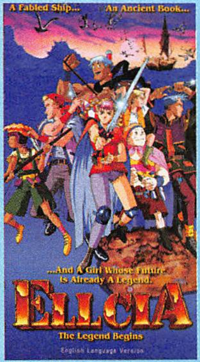






My expectations of *Ellcia* weren't that high. Everything that I had seen, from promotional trailers to the video's cover art, made it look like another zany half fantasy, half sci-fi show destined to be forgotten months from now. To my utter surprise, not only did I like *Ellcia*, but I REALLY liked *Ellcia*.

Ellcia opens with the tale of Megaronia, where ancient technology from a long-dead civilization has been uncovered. The findings advance Megaronia's weapons by hundreds of years, and King Nabosu uses this to conquer all those who oppose him. His armies attack neighboring lands, controlling the people and destroying all remnants of their religion. But a tale tells of one who will rise up, take control of the fabled ship of God, and conquer the evil king. This person is Eira, a young pirate who only finds out who she really is when she gets in the way of the king's daughter, who plans to fulfill the prophecy and steal the ship of God.







Now, here's my problem with Ellcia: the character designs. Take Eira, for example. She wears jeans with one leg cut off, and kneepads over that, which just looks absolutely silly. Truth be told, all of the main characters are either dressed goofy, or are just plain annoying. It's almost as if the creators didn't believe in the quality of their story enough, so they threw in a cast of out-of-place looking characters to add a bit of humor. Very sad.

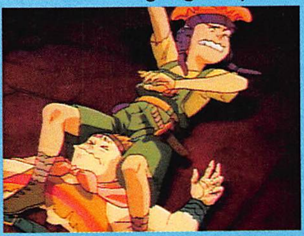
That aside, I have nothing but praise for *Ellcia*. The story is fantastic, definitely a small-scale epic. The dubbing was a nice surprise, as all of the voice actors seemed to actually care about the characters they were playing. This is one title I could stand to watch without checking out the sub version for comparison (which is saying a lot coming from me). So, give *Ellcia* a chance, ignore the funny-looking characters, and enjoy the rich and intriguing storyline—it's well worth it.

AF Review

F D C B A
animation
dubbing
story
music

B







Blue Seed is one of those big-name, mass-product-producing series, and yet up to this point, I had never actually given it much thought. I don't usually go for the 'demon' genre of anime, but I gave *Blue Seed* a chance, wondering if maybe I had been really missing out.

So I sat down with *Blue Seed: Sea Devils*, which contains episodes 15 and 16 of the ongoing series. Episode 15 deals with a construction site that has recently been having problems with strange acts of demon interference. The TAC team is called to the scene, where they discover a group of Kappa demons trying to protect a sacred tree that sits close to the worksite. Episode 16 finds Kunikida, the leader of the TAC, on a journey to investigate the murder of an old friend. He finds out his friend has turned into a crazed beast after tasting the blood of his wife, who is an immortal being from Japanese mythology.



I would definitely rank *Blue Seed* higher than most of the other 'humans fighting big demon monster' shows that linger around, as the characters were more interesting and seemed to actually have some semblance of a personality. Yet, at the same time, it seemed to stray little from the stereotype of such a series. Strange events occurred, the TAC was sent to the scene, they did battle with the demons, and the episode was over. This, combined with average animation, and a case of English voice actors giving a standard, non-inspired dubbing job, did little to make me want to see more of the series.

I know that I can't fully judge the series without knowing more about it, and I'm sure *Blue Seed* fans will be glad to see the next installment hitting our shores. However, for the casual fan that picks up a copy to see what *Blue Seed* is all about, I'm not sure how impressed they will be. If you like your anime with loads of demons scurrying around, give it a go. If you don't, you might not find much here to make you a fan.

AF Review

F D C B A
animation
dubbing
story
music

C+



The Street Fighter II V series brings the Japanese television series to America, with three episodes per cassette and a storyline beginning with 15-year-old tour guide, Chun-Li, giving Ryu and Ken (who are 17) a tour of Hong Kong. This series surprised me. After the lame travesty that is the American Saturday morning cartoon, I almost didn't want to watch these. But, I found them actually enjoyable, in a tongue-in-cheek kind of way. They're fun. They're not great. In fact, everything about *SFIIV*—the animation, music, dialogue, voice acting, dubbing, etc.—is just a shade above mediocre. But somehow, *SFIIV* is more than the sum of its parts. For those who take their *Street Fighter* too seriously, though (like most of the GF staff), you'd best pass on this series.



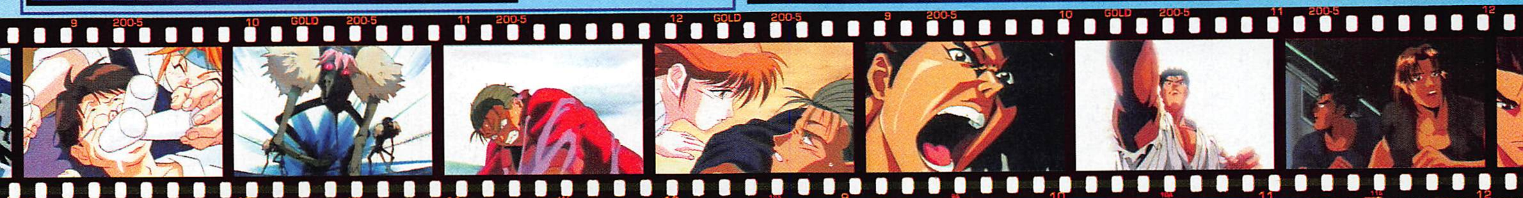


AF Review

F D C B A
animation
dubbing
story
music

C+





OTHER STUFF

NINTENDO

Nintendo's most surprising announcement at this year's E3 will involve the unveiling of Rare's secret game, a 128 meg 3D action title called *Dream*. Tim and Simon Stamper are producing *Dream* at Rare in the UK, with over 40 people working on the project under the watchful eye of Shigeru Miyamoto. *Dream* is set for a November release, and will be 30% complete (and playable) at the show. Rare's other big games for E3 will be *Ken Griffey Jr. 64* and *GoldenEye*. Other games like *Buggy Boogie*, *Body Harvest*, *Pilot Wings 2*, a *Kirby* action game, *F-Zero 64* and *Yoshi's Island* could all end up being at the E3, but at this point it's hard to tell if they will show up on video or in a playable form.

Rumor has it that the 64DD will also appear at E3, but not in playable form. It will be set up similarly to last year's Shoshinkai, with the unit itself running demos, and nothing more. No one will be permitted to play 64DD games. *Zelda64* (another128meg cart) might also be shown, but since the US version won't hit until Spring of '98 don't expect it to be there.

F-Zero 64 will ship in Japan this November, and then early '98 in the States. It will run at 60fps and will undoubtedly (I guarantee) have a 4 player mode. Nintendo has also revealed that a 64DD update will be made available later next year with more tracks and cars, just like the as-yet-un-announced *Mario Kart 64DD* upgrade for next year. Speaking of the 64DD, *Super Mario RPG 2* will ship 6 months to a year after the launch of the 64DD in Japan.

At a recent developers conference, Nintendo told developers that the RAM expansion for the 64DD will be four megabytes. The US 64DD will not be released until late August 1998, with a suggested retail price of as little as $129 (including a game). That price is guaranteed, and might end up going as low as $99 if Nintendo can manage it. Konami has confirmed In *The Zone '98* (an update of their popular basketball series) for the N64, scheduled for a late Christmas release. The US version of *Goemon 5* (*Mystical Ninja*) will be coming to the US, although it hasn't been officially announced yet. *Dracula 64* will not be out in Japan until early in the1st quarter of '98, and a US version won't appear before the 2nd quarter. Konami also has 12 other N64 games in the works, including *Contra64*, *Gradius*, *Battle Dancers*, and *Hyper Olympics in Nagano* (*Track & Field*). There are also rumors of *Vandal Hearts* and *Suikoden*, supposedly being updated for the 64DD.

Nintendo and Namco are finally talking again. Rumor has it that at the Tokyo game show Nintendo and Namco met to discuss a whole new exclusive lineup of N64 cart and 64DD titles for 1998 and beyond; just like the EA/Nintendo deal. The first 2 games to come out of the agreement include an RPG and a sports game. But sources at Namco suggest that 4 more titles are already in development: a fighting game, one driving game, and possibly two shooters.

SEGA

Gun Griffon Ho, the sequel to GameArts' excellent first-person mech-shooter *Gun Griffon*,will feature a cable-link two player version in Japan.

Rumor has it that Sega's Model 3 *Lost World* coin-op may be making a translation to Saturn, along with *VF3* and *Scud Race*. *Lost World* is a gun game, similar to the original *Jurassic Park* coin-op, only with stunning polygon graphics.

Speaking of *VF3*, another rumor has surfaced that AM2 is currently in the process of attempting to convert *VF3* to the Saturn WITHOUT the aid of any cartridge upgrade whatsoever. Sega would neither confirm nor deny this report, but stated that all will be revealed at E3.

Sonic R, Sonic Team's first true 32-Bit *Sonic* game, will also be at E3, most likely in playable form, but if not, then definitely on video. Sega also claims that they will have three more 'major' surprises to be revealed at E3.

SEGA US RELEASE SCHEDULE

July:	*Shining the Holy Ark, Manx TT World Series Baseball '98*
August:	*Sonic Jam, Duke Nukem*
September:	*Sky Target, Quake, Bomberman*
October:	*Last Bronx, NBA Action '98*
November:	*Enemy Zero, Sonic R, NHL Hockey '98, WW Soccer '98*

SONY

At the E3, Sony will be showing off their much anticipated modem add-on for the PS. The name of the peripheral is still unknown, but it will definitely be a 28.8 bps, set for a September release at an amazing price of only $99. No word yet on what the first batch of PS modem games will be, but rumors hint at *Jet Moto 2* (surely an ideal candidate). Anyone up for 8-player *Jet Moto?*

Here's some big news: Recently 6 developers from Rare (who had previously worked on *DKC*, *GoldenEye*, and *Blast Corps*) left to start their own game development company. The name of their company is Eighth Wonder, and they plan to produce 3 games for the PS under the Sony Europe label.

Also, Sony will be releasing the astonishing *Tobal 2* in the US this November.

SEGASOFT'S WEB VENGEANCE

Are you sick and tired of the "World Wide Wait" and boring Web sites? SegaSoft may have just created the ultimate cyber-tension reliever. Their *Web Vengeance* is a new desktop "toy" that lets you attack and pummel offending sites with various weapons. Each *Web Vengeance* pack includes three offensive and one defensive weapon, so that even Web Masters (site owners) can fight back. The weapons come in three unique packages: Urban Assault, Food Fight, and Medieval. Urban Assault is more of a Shotgun, AK-47, and Bulletproof Vest pack, Food Fight has pies, tomatoes, and cookie sheets, and Medieval offers catapults, crossbows, and shields. And while the explosions, bullet holes, and splats are represented by excellent graphics and sound effects, no real damage can be done to a site (darn!). But have no fear, your works of art will not be lost! Upload your masterpieces to SegaSoft's "Hall of Shame" and others can appreciate your powers of destruction, or check out the most abused sites on the "Top 50 Hit List." Hee hee, blow-up MTV with a few grenades!

EARTHWORM JIM 3D

Here's some new info regarding the N64 version of *Earthworm Jim*. The game is underway (about 15%) at Shiny with a best case release date of... well, perhaps later this year. Although the Scottish developers (who remain a mystery) behind this gem of gems are foggy on whether that's feasable. Get it? Foggy. You know Scotland... oh, forget it. Anyways it's coming. And none to soon! The game is constructed like *Mario 64* and it is aimed exclusively at the N64, for now at least.

Capcom's Saturn E3 line-up is as follows:
-*Cyberbots*
-*Dark Stalkers 3*
-*Dungeon & Dragons*
-*Resident Evil*
-*Resident Evil 2*
-*Street Fighter Vs. X-Men*
-*Street Fighter Collection*

A HEAD SHOT EVERYTIME!

Naki International, a leading supplier of video game accessories, recently announced the release of their forthcoming Lunar Gun for both Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation. The gun itself is, how shall we say, 'heavily influenced' by Konami's Justifier and comes complete with an 8-foot cord and a number of cool special functions, including Auto Reload, Auto Fire, Semi Auto Fire and a 'Special Button' which can be configured to trigger bombs and such.

However, what makes the Lunar Gun so special is the 'Red Sight.' Released simultaneously with the gun, the Red Sight is an actual laser sight that can be directed at the screen for pin-point shooting. The Red Sight takes its power from the PS and comes on whenever the PS power is turned on, regardless of what game is in. We gave the gun to Knightmare to test, and have regretted it ever since. Red dots have been frequently appearing on editor's foreheads all around the office

closely followed by loud screams of 'What you say about my momma?!' The Lunar Gun will retail for $29.99 and the Red Sight will sell separately for $16.99.

FINAL ROUND!

•Vic Tokai is considering releasing Dark Rift in Japan under the name Space Dynamites.

•*Clay Fighter* is said to be compatible with the Rumble Pack. Yes, the rumble of clay shall be felt by all!

•Nintendo's 64DD game Cabbage will employ concepts of the Genetic Algorithm and Neural Network. HAL, the makers of the game, offered this explanation: "In this game you will never know what kind of creature/monster will be born, or what type of personality it will have." Umm...sounds interesting.

•*Turrican 64* (yes!) is currently in development for the N64, and it's being handled by long-time *Turrican* developers Factor 5. The rumored release date is 4th quarter.

•T•HQ is producing the sequel to *WCW vs. The World*. *WCW Nitro* will be out in December of this year, again for the PS. T•HQ is also making a game based on the Stephen King Novel *The Dark Half*. Details are sketchy, but it should ready for a 4th quarter release.

•*Alien vs. Predator* and *Alien Resurrection* are both coming to the Saturn and PlayStation in the 4th quarter of this year under the Fox Interactive label.

•*Bio Hazard* for the Saturn will hit Japan late this summer, with a street date of July 25th.

•Ocean has recently bought the rights to port over Imagineer's *Multi Racer Championship* for the N64. Ocean will also bring out the action game *Space Circus* for the N64 by the end of the year.

•*Donkey Kong 64* is on schedule for a Spring '98 release, not Christmas like some have speculated. This 128-meg monster is now a 100% real-time 3D action game like *Mario 64*, with Donkey and Diddy taking over as the main characters.

RETRACTION ACTION!

•On page 84 of the April Issue (Volume 5, Issue 4) we ran a review *FireProWrestling: 6 Men Scramble* and printed a PS logo in the information bar. The game is actually available for Saturn ONLY. There is no PS version currently planned. Sorry!

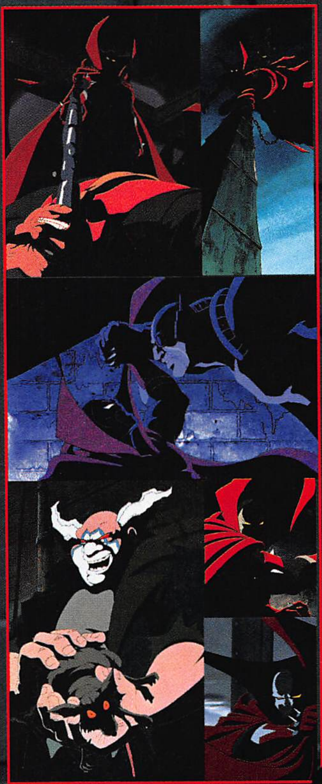
•On page 64 of the May issue (Volume 5 Issue 5) we ran a preview of *MegaMan X4* and printed a PS logo in the information bar. *MegaMan X4* is coming out for PS, but all the shots shown in the preview were Saturn. Sorry!

More Stuff

SPAWN

Par for the course, additional *Spawn* goods arrived from HBO and Sony just in time for yet another glimpse of what's sure to be the best ever made for TV animated feature and hopefully a memorable game. These shots show much promise (check the lighting) but still no cape. Like we said in PS Coming Soon, it's tough to comment further without seeing the game in motion.





GEN 13

Jim Lee's Wildstorm Entertainment is readying a direct-to-video *Gen 13* feature for release in Fall. If you've not scoped out this comic, do so; it's great. This one's got video game written all over it. Stay tuned.



Cool toys from Japan

Whilst carousing the shops in Akihabara (Tokyo) we ran across these game and anime related gems. Either available or orderable at finer anime stores throughout the US they're well worth obtaining. Game/anime related goods from Japan are of the utmost detail and quality. Sad we have nothing even remotely as cool here. Perhaps Sega/Bandai will save us!



Rei - Evangelion



Sophia, Ellis, and Tracy - Toshinden



Honey - Fighting Vipers



Alien Race
Choose a character from one of three alien races (Mezzodon, Rastigaar, or Basharkka) in an attempt to protect your Reactor Core from opposing alien races.



Vigilance
Play as one of eight members of an elite anti-terrorist team in this 3-D mission based action/adventure which utilizes AnyChannel's AnyWorld 3-D engine.



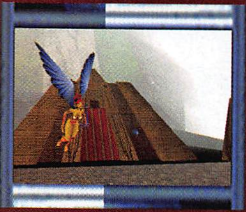
10Six
Build, manage, and protect your stake in Transium (a powerful energy source) in what has been dubbed the first million player action/strategy title.



HEAT warz
Attempting to create a more benign outlet for primal human aggressiveness, HEAT warz was born. Command one of eight armies in this eight player strategy game.



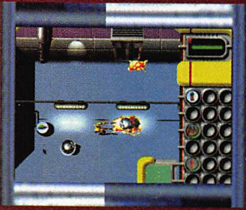
Ragged Earth
Four rival races face off in this 3-D multiplayer target and fire strategy game. Control a four warrior team in an attempt to destroy the enemy and rule the universe.



Skies
Set in an ever evolving and persistent mythological universe, Skies allows the player to choose and then develop a wide selection of humanoid, animal, and bestial creatures.



Flesh Feast on Zombie Island
Alternate control between one of four team members in an attempt to trap and destroy zombies in this very gory 3-D action/strategy game. Not for the squeamish.



Scud
Based on the hit underground comic, Scud:The Disposable Assassin, Scud is an 8-player overhead shooter. Multiplayer modes include deathmatch, Capture the Flag, and Hot Potato.

Shifting its focus to the burgeoning online multi-player gaming networks, SegaSoft's HEAT.NET (www.heat.net) hopes to provide a easy on-ramp to the joys of network gaming. HEAT offers a sleek interface, point-and-click multiplayer gaming, tournaments, and several community building features such as HEATmail, user home pages, player rankings, and chat rooms. In addition, accruable "Degrees" or frequent player points will be redeemable for goods and special services within HEAT.

Using their proprietary IPX technology, rIPX, and dedicated MPath servers, SegaSoft promises a low latency, high performance multiplayer network. At launch, the network is said to be able to support 250,000 members.

There are two types of HEAT memberships. The entry level Perimeter membership (free) allows access to most games, HEATmail, chat rooms and other common areas. Full fledged HEAT members (roughly $50 annually) will have access to special events, exclusive games, and tournament play with prizes.

Practically any multiplayer PC game will be compatible with HEAT. Additionally, SegaSoft will also feature original titles exclusive to HEAT (see left).

HEAT

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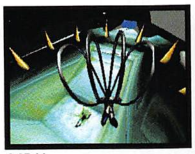
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Dear Posty,

When I played *Mario 64* I realized a very strange fact... Mario and the whole idea of Mario is practically based on drugs! I know it sounds strange, but the similarities are very shocking.

Example 1: Way back on the NES, Mario would eat a mushroom and "get big." Maybe that's him having a psychedelic experience.

Example 2: There is a level in *Mario 64* where one of the star's name is "Scary 'Shrooms." 'Shrooms are what the drug 'community' calls a Magic Mushroom—a psychedelic drug that you eat and makes you hallucinate.

Example 3: Maybe Mario ate a mushroom and hence that level in *Mario Kart* where everything is all messed up.

Example 4: Not just in Nintendo is this drug-related gaming a problem. What about *Resident Evil*, where to make the character feel better you'd use a "Green Herb." The picture looks a lot like marijuana to me.

If anybody else sees these examples (I'm sure there's more) then I'm not insane. So answer this question ... Why? Thank you for listening to me babble,

Worm
Amherst, OH

PS: Why in the heck would someone buy an import RPG? Reading is half the game—these people must have money to burn.

Hmmm. You certainly have some interesting theories there, Worm. These occurrences are often joked about in gaming circles. It's all tongue in cheek really, but if you want to take it to the extreme (and it seems you do) you missed out Yoshi's Island*—when Yoshi eats one of those little white balls and trips out. Or what about* Doctor Mario*? If Senator Lieberman ever gets wind of this, we'll all be playing Scrabble!*

As for why do people buy import RPGs? Well, the main reasons I can think of are A) They can read Japanese, B) They're not prepared to wait six months for a translation and C) They just rock at RPGs and want to make them harder.

Dear Posty,

I am a very proud Sega Saturn owner who takes gaming very seriously. I would like to thank you guys for putting together the only unbiased magazine out there, designed for the serious gamesplayer. I am also a big fan of RPGs and some action/adventure titles. With that in mind, here are my questions:

1) Is *Airs Adventure* going to be released here in the States? Either way, could you guys please review it so I know if it is worth buying?

2) Is *Shining the Holy Ark* in the same league as *Final Fantasy VII*? If not, is there any Saturn RPG in development that is?

3) I've noticed that the GameFan web site is loaded with great pics from *Grandia*, but I haven't noticed a preview in any recent issue. If you haven't already done so, could you give us some word on this great title?

4) I read somewhere that Square is developing two Saturn games. Is this true (Please say yes)?

5) Has Sega released anything new on *Sonic X-Treme*? I haven't heard anything about it since its delay. Also, should I expect it to be as good as *Mario 64*?

6) And finally, is there any chance of seeing *Vectorman* on the Saturn? In 3D, perhaps?

Sincerely,
J. Maniaci
S.H. Michigan

1) There are currently no plans to release Airs Adventure *in the States, but I wouldn't lose any sleep over it. It's nothing to write home about. Well, maybe to your dog.*

2) Shining the Holy Ark *is good, but not that good. To be honest they're different kinds of RPG, so a comparison isn't really appropriate.*

3) We'll probably run a preview a bit closer to the game's release (tentatively September).

4) Ok, yes. But it's not true.

5) Well, Sonic Jam *shows off the technology that Sega might be using for the next* Sonic *game. I don't think it's called* Sonic X-Treme *any more, but that was a retarded name anyway.*

6) Blue Sky said they were going to do a 32-bit Vectorman *a while back, but we haven't heard anything since. I wouldn't be surprised if it made a 'surprise appearance' at E3.*

Hey Posty,

First of all, let me say that GameFan is an excellent example of how, if one delivers good stuff, they will succeed. Keep up the good work! Now on to the questions:

1. What's up with the Europa section? Who cares what's going on in Europe? It's not like they're Japan.

2. What happened to *Policenauts* for the Saturn in America? Did Konami cancel it?

3. Is *EO*, *Real Sound*, *Langrisser 3*, or *Virus* coming to the States?

4. When are you guys going to bring back Anime Fan?

5. Have you seen the *Panzer* RPG? Is it good?

Well, thanks for reading this letter. I hope that you may answer some of the questions.

Sincerely,
Wai-Kit Cheung

1) Yeah, right. Who cares about Core, Rare, Scavenger, Psygnosis, Probe, DMA, Delphine, Amazing Studios, Argonaut, Eurocom, Rebellion, Neon... They're not doing anything we want to hear about.

2) 'Fraid so. Not 'commercially viable' enough I guess. But do you know what really sucks? They had pretty much finished the translation when the project was canned. So somewhere out there, an American Policenauts *exists...*

3) Sega is bringing out EO *but there's no word on the other three.* Virus *is fairly high profile, so it might make it.*

4) Already done it pal! Are we good or what?!?!

5) Yeah, I've seen Panzer Azel *and it looks amazing! The battles are traditional command-driven RPG fare though, not action.*

Oh, and about your PS: That situation will, in all probability, be taken care of by the time you read this.

Dear High Grand Exalted Incredibly Cool Dare-I-Say-It-Yes Post Meister,

<deep breath> I know there must be plenty of letters coming into

your grand all-that-stuff-I-said mail box concerning *Final Fantasy VII*, but mine is not to ask little questions but to try and find out something very important. You see, it came to my attention in your review of the game that the Japanese *FF7* wasn't exactly complete to deadlines. I found out later, from a very important website, how right you were. It seems that in the game there was a certain mini-quest left out, not to spoil it for anyone, but let's just say it was the resurrection of a certain character. Anyway, it seems that once that mini-quest was done, the FMV ending to the game would be quite different. Instead of the ironic ending I've heard so much about, you would see one that is quite happy, and that also goes on to reveal what happens to certain hidden characters.

Now Square had the FMV and all the areas rendered and put in, but while they were finishing up the coding, the big shots bust in, told them the deadline was up, and shipped the game. So the better ending is in there, just not accessible. I've also heard that a petition is going round for Square L.A. to fix this for the American release, if it's a simple matter of finishing the code. I'm wondering if you know anything about this. Anything is helpful.

Thanks,
Martin Wiener
NJ

This is mere speculation on that 'important web sites' part. Nothing has come out of Square regarding this matter, and if I were a betting man, I'd wager nothing will. Heck, I am a betting man. 10 bucks says it's all a load of horse spit. Any takers?

Dear Honored Veteran,
I thought I'd open by advising you to prepare for the big Anniversary next year. Whose? No, not whose—what. 1998 will be the 30th anniversary of the Video Game! Yes, in 1968, David Bahr presented the world with the fruit of his genius .. um, that is, Pong. Well, it WAS the first. How do you plan to celebrate? I'm working on a giant picture with 100 different video game characters! I hope to send it to you when I'm done. Why? Because I like you. (M, O, U, S, E...) *ahem* Now onto the inevitable Q&A segment...
1) Is Baby Mario going to be in *Yoshi's Island 64*? I shuddered when I heard the rumor...
2) Now that a *SF2* compilation is on the way, will we finally see that *MegaMan* compilation we've dreamed of, prayed about, sacrificed goats for, etc?
3) Why is Anime Fan gone? That was the icing on your sugared magazine cupcake! If it's because the people there were too busy, I volunteer!
4) Any word on Square and Enix's projects after *FFVII* and *DQVII*? *Chrono Trigger 2*?
5) Where does this spunky pasta guy get off not caring about box art?! If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem, damn it!
6) I won't keep you longer, just some quick shots: *Punch Out 64*? *Phantasy Star 5*? *Pocky and Rocky 3*? *Oasis 3*? *Tales of Phantasia*? *Mario Paint 64*? *Seiken Densetsu 4*? *MegaMan X4* (dumb question)? *Ninja Gaiden 4*? *Shining the Holy Ark*? *Nights 2*? *Crash 2*? *whew* Well, I have a masterpiece to get back to. Take care.
Sincerely,
Sean "Sean" Norton

Wow, has it really been 30 years? Of course, when you get as old as I am you lose track of time.
1) I hope not. He irritated the hell out of me.
2) I guess we'll have to wait and see. Personally I'd rather see a Ghouls 'n Ghosts *compilation, but that's just me.*
3) Well Sean "Sean," get ready for a sugary treat, cuz Anime Fan is back to stay.
4) Square has FF Tactics, Saga Frontier *and* Front Mission Alternative *in the works. Enix has* Yuke! Yuke! Troublemakers *slated for June, but who knows what they'll do after* DQVII.
5) Yeah! Right! You tell him, Sean "Sean!"
6) Won't keep me? Damn, what do you call that list? Still, there's a simple solution to every problem. I'll just ignore it.

Write to me or I'll run for President!
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ADVERTISER'S INDEX

BRE	113
CAPCOM	47
EIDOS	11
FOX INTERACTIVE	30-31
GAME CAVE	116-IBC
GAME EXPRESS	115
GAME SOURCE	97
GT INTERACTIVE	22-23
INTERPLAY	26-27
NAMCO	4-5, 7, 15
NINTENDO	IFC-1
PANDEMONIUM	75
PLAYMATES	3
PSYGNOSIS	16-17, 20-21
SEGA	8-9, BC
SONY	12-13, 79
UNIVERSE VIDEOGAMES	113
VIDEO GAME DISCOUNTERS	112
VIRGIN	37
W.I.T.	85

ADVERTISER'S INDEX

GAME CAVE	108-IBC
GAME SOURCE	85
GT INTERACTIVE	22-23
INTERPLAY	19, 76-77
LUCASARTS	15-17
MIDWAY	11
NAMCO	6-7, 9
NINTENDO	IFC-1
PLAYMATES	21
SEGA	2-3, BC
T•HQ	25, 79
TOMMO	106
UNIVERSE VIDEOGAMES	107
VIRGIN	5

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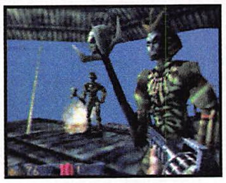
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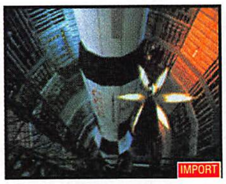
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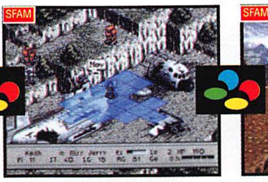
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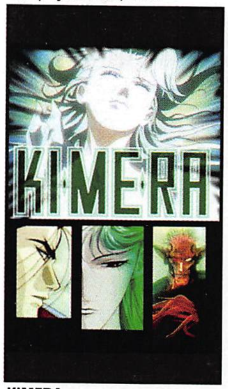
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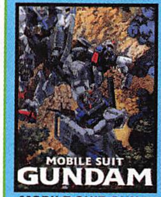


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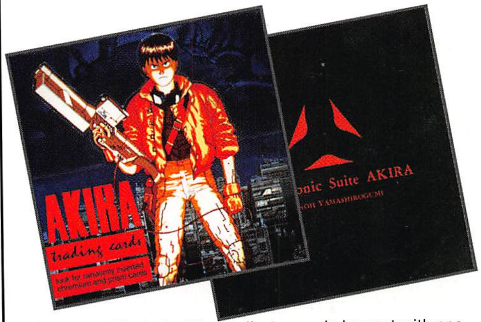
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